

Withdrawn from
Yale University Library

YALE COLLEGE LIBRARY



HISTORICAL ACCOUNT

OF THE

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

AND SOCIETY

IN

NEWBURYPORT, MASSACHUSETTS,

ADDRESSED

TO THE CONGREGATION,

WORSHIPPING IN FEDERAL STREET,

JULY 9, 1826.

BY SAMUEL P. WILLIAMS.

“Your Grandsires’ shades with jealous eye,
Frown down to see their offspring lie
Careless, and let their” memory “die.”
Watts’ Lyrics.

The righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance.
Word of God.

PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF THE CHURCH.

SARATOGA SPRINGS:

PRINTED BY G. M. DAVISON.

1826

[TO THE
MEMBERS OF THE
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH AND
CONGREGATION
IN
NEWBURYPORT,
THE FOLLOWING HISTORICAL DISCOURSE
IS INSCRIBED,
AS A SMALL TOKEN
OF THE INCREASING RESPECT AND AFFECTION
OF
THEIR DEVOTED FRIEND
AND
PASTOR,

6/15/64
* * * Copies of the discourse are placed in the hands of the Deacons and Elders of the Church, for the use of all the members of the congregation, free of expense.

HISTORICAL ACCOUNT.

DEUTERONOMY, XXXII, 7.

Remember the days of old ; consider the years of many generations : ask thy father and he will shew thee, thy elders and they will tell thee.

We stand on ground, where, less than two centuries ago, the savage kindled his council fire, and amused himself in the frantic dance. Here the sorcerer held the Merrimac Sachem in chains of ignorance and superstition, and successfully taught the parent to offer supplications to Hobbamok,* and to sacrifice his children to Kichtan.† But God has been here, and by the instrumentality of your ancestors, broken the spell of the savage, dispossessed the heathen, and substituted in place of their barbarous ignorance and idolatrous rites, the knowledge and worship of himself. God has been here, and in the churches‡ planted thick around

* Hobbamok, according to tradition, was the evil spirit, worshipped by the Aberginians, in the form of a serpent.

† Kichtan was the chief of the Indian deities, supposed to be the good spirit.

‡ From the first church in Newbury, planted by the Rev. Thomas Parker, we may now reckon at least ten branches, within the original limits of that town.

us, given delightful proof of the verity of his word, and the sovereignty of his grace. Behold fulfilled his covenant of peace. I will plant them, and multiply them, and set my sanctuary in the midst of them forever. O LORD GOD of our fathers, thou art GOD in heaven, thou rulest over all the kingdoms of the heathen. Art not thou *our* GOD, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people, to give it to their seed forever? Tell ye your children of it. Hide not from the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done; that the children which shall be born may arise and declare them unto their children, that they may set their hope in GOD.

As it is GOD who divides to his people their inheritance, and separates the sons of Adam, and adjusts the bounds of their habitations, it would be an ungrateful requital of his benefits, and contempt of the instructions of his providence, to overlook the hand which has conducted, or forget the way in which it has led them.

Respect to the memory of our worthy forefathers is the dictate of filial affection. It is sanctioned by the precepts of religion. To acquaint ourselves and our children with their history, that we may revere and emulate their virtues, and thus perpetuate the praises of Jehovah's goodness, is therefore to be numbered among our most sacred and delightful duties.

To collect and spread before you such a history of this religious society, as the imperfect materials which remain may supply, will be at this time an act of obedience to the judicatories of the

church,* as well as of homage to God and hopeful utility to you.

The *origin* of this church, the form and administration of its *government*, its *trials*, and the character of its *first pastors*, will be the subjects of the following discourse.

1. Its origin.

Of the Fathers of New-England, it may be said almost without hyperbole, God planted them wholly a right seed. He “sifted a whole nation” for the choice grain with which this wilderness was sown. So that, as the venerable Higginson admonished the General Court,† this is so much rather a plantation of religion than of trade, that *he* has as little of the spirit of a true New-England-man as of a Christian, who yields not to its religious interests the first place in his affections. For almost half a century the church was, in no very qualified sense, holiness to the LORD. Her first ways and her first love will be always a theme of grateful exultation to as many of her descendants as are not ashamed of the gospel. The profession of her purity of doctrine, worship and discipline, was legible, not in her written standards only, but in the life and conversation of her members. They received abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness, and walking in the fear of the LORD and comfort of the Holy Spirit, were edified. A learned and devoted ministry adorned the church, and a prevalent regard to christian morals characterized the magistrate and the citizen. But religion, like literature,

* See circular of the agent of general assembly to the presbyterian churches, within the bounds of the synod of Albany and the New-England states, Feb. 1826.

† Election sermon, 1663.

arts and trade, has its periods of revival and decline. Before the first generation had universally found a quiet grave, the voice of gratulation and thanksgiving was succeeded by that of lamentation and complaint. Many of the faithful watchmen who lived to witness the change, have left their testimony to a visible decay of the power of religion from the year 1670. And after all the first generation had departed, it was publicly declared that the grand object of the colonists was not generally pursued by their children. That conversions were rare, immoralities common among all orders of men, and that the churches were in a languishing condition. That family worship and the religious education of children were neglected, and that a general defection from primitive purity among the people and their pastors, had become too obvious to be denied.* In the strong language of Mather, 1702, the modern Christianity was "but a spectre of the ancient." Partial reformations succeeded the efforts which were made to recover the country from this sickly state, but were followed by still greater coldness and security. The memorable revival of religion† which renovated the face of society in New-England, and filled the

* See *Perils of the Times*, by President Willard, and Prince's *Christian History*.

† Of the character of this work, 68 clergymen convened in Boston, July, 1743, for the purpose of enquiring into its nature, gave their decided approbation; and attestations to its genuineness were soon after added by 48 ministers, to satisfy the ill informed and incredulous, that whatever extravagance and disorder may accompany a revival of religion, the influence of the Holy Spirit is distinguishable from that of the imagination, and is alike honorable to God and productive of the happiest moral effects upon the hearts and lives of its subjects

wise of both hemispheres with gladness, commenced at Northampton, under the ministry of the Rev. Jonathan Edwards, and was much extended by the publication of his narrative in 1736. Its progress was also furthered by the preaching of Mr. Whitfield,* Mr. Tennent and other itinerants of kindred zeal and excellence, though less popular, and of consequence less extensively applauded and defamed. Those men were reformers, not sectarians. They sought not the erection of a new temple, but a repair of the deserted, ivy-mantled edifice which the fathers had reared. Or if sectarianism characterized their preaching, it differed imperceptibly in its objects and effects, from that of the harbinger, and the apostles of Christ. It was adapted to the necessities of the times, and admirably fitted to remove the spirit of slumber from the churches.† Whitfield was a child of the established church, baptized and nurtured by her hands, and without overweaning attachment to his nurse, loved and maintained the doctrines she had taught

* Mr. Whitfield commenced his labors in New-England in 1740, when about 20 years of age, and though the young itinerant needed rather letters of commendation from the stated pastor, the following notice of Mr. Edwards, in his journal, discovers something of his early discernment and piety. The memory of the "successor and grandson to the great Stoddard, will be always precious to me. A solid excellent Christian. I think I may say I have not seen his equal in all New-England."

† The Rev. Mr. Shurtliff, of the 2d church in Portsmouth, (N. H.) June 1, 1743, testifies that "Mr. Whitfield's and Mr. Tennent's visit was blessed of God to very many, in leading them to shake off their heavy slumbers;" notwithstanding Whitfield himself remarks in his journal, that though he preached to "a polite auditory" in that town, he began to question whether he had been speaking to rational creatures.

him, according to the exposition of her evangelical clergy. But some of you have heard him yourselves, and can testify with his cotemporary fellow laborers, in the language of Doct. Sewall, that while his *manner* "was moving, earnest, winning, melting, the *matter* was none other than those vital truths which animated all the martyrs, and led the hearer into the views of that inward active piety," which the mighty power of God alone produces. He could collect an audience of many thousands, without offering a single novel doctrine as a bribe. For, said Doct. Colman, "We preach the same Christ, the same doctrines of grace, and according to godliness, with the same gospel motives and arguments, applications to conscience, supplications to God for you." His first sermon in *this* place, was preached on the 10th September, 1740, in the presence of many ministers, and with much effect.† The revival in this county commenced the following year: and to the spirit of fervid piety and zeal, aroused by the instrumentality of *such* men, we trace the origin of this religious society. The earliest notice of any of its members which is to be found, is on the records of the first church in Newbury, in the hand writing of the Rev. Christopher Toppan, and is the last public act of the

* Sermon at the opening of an evening lecture in Brattle street, Boston, Oct. 21, 1740.

† At one of his lectures in front of the first meeting house of this society, a stone was thrown at the preacher, which falling short of his person, had well nigh struck the Bible from his hand. His reply to this unprovoked assault was worthy of the follower of the great Master of assemblies. "I have a warrant from God," said he, "to preach. His seal (holding up the Bible) is in my hand, and I stand in the King's highway."

church recorded by that venerable man. It is as follows :

At a legal church meeting, June 6, 1744, it was voted unanimously in the affirmative, that "whereas several of our brethren in the first church in Newbury, have separated themselves from communion with said church, it is desired that said separating brethren would give in their reasons to said church, why, or for what reason they have separated, at the next meeting; every separate member to give in his reason in particular by himself." In reference to the same persons, it is stated by the Rev. John Tucker, who became colleague pastor with Mr. Toppan, on the 20th Nov. the following year, that before his labors commenced, a large separation, especially from Mr. Lowell's* and Mr. Toppan's meetings, had taken place. That these people had built a meeting house† near the line between the two parishes, in which they usually attended public worship, chiefly first, under the performances of Mr. Joseph Adams, then a young zealous new-light preacher, and afterwards, under those of the Rev. Mr. Jonathan Parsons, who succeeded Mr. Adams, and who, he adds, is still the head of this separate people, though in another house. Nearly or quite one third of the parish where I am, were concerned in this separation.‡

* The Rev. John Lowell was the first pastor of the 3d parish in Newbury, now the first congregational society in Newburyport, and was ordained, Jan. 19, 1725.

† The house referred to by Mr. Tucker, stood in High street; and becoming too small for the congregation, was taken down, and the present place of worship erected in 1756.

‡ Tucker's Brief Account, p. 27.

The reasons demanded by the church, of the members who had withdrawn, were exhibited to the pastor, but make no part of the records of either church; and being in the form of *charges*, which were never submitted to a *mutual* council, need not now be exposed. The pastor, however, submitted them to a council selected by the church and himself, to advise to measures proper to be pursued. This council, admitting the explanations of the pastor, deemed the charges unsupported, and declared it the duty of the aggrieved to make concessions and return to the communion of the church. But they had not been heard, even before the church, and considering the advice of council gratuitous, the breach was not repaired: and the church thinking it unnecessary to proceed to disciplinary measures, the aggrieved considered themselves orderly withdrawn.

In the year preceding the session of this council, a considerable number of the church under the care of the Rev. Mr. Lowell, 38 of which were male members, withdrew from their communion. The church declared their reasons insufficient, and declined to grant their subsequent request for a dismissal. As they had been premature in this step, though they supposed they had the best human authority for it,* the church cited them to appear before them for admonition, but the citation was not

* "If particular persons cannot agree with the major part, they may make their remonstrance and be dismissed, if they cannot continue there with tolerable satisfaction; or they may withdraw to another congregation, if they are aggrieved and the society refuse to dismiss them. Such a liberty must be maintained."—*Watts' Foundation of a Christian Church.*

literally obeyed; and it does not appear that the church proceeded to any higher censure.*

On the third of January, 1746, 19 persons united themselves in form, as a distinct church, by signing an appropriate instrument;† and on the 7th, presented a call to the Rev. Jonathan Parsons, in these laconic terms :

“REV. SIR,—By these we inform you that we have formed ourselves into a church, and as such, we now hereby signify our desire, that you would accept of the Pastoral office over us. In expectation of your answer, with prayers for the direction and blessing of heaven in this affair, we rest your hearty friends and brethren in the gospel of Christ.

C. PIERCE,	}	<i>Committee of the new Church in Newbury.</i>
M. BRADSTREET,		
I. BROWN,		

Having chosen their clerk and deacons, a platform of church discipline and covenant were adopted, and on the 26th Feb. signed by males 24, females 21 ‡ to which have been since added the signatures of 193 male and 488 female members; making an aggregate of 731, of whom about 200 are with us “to this present, and the rest are fallen asleep” or removed to other churches.

The first church in Newbury did not observe these movements with indifference, but passed the following resolution in reference to Mr. Parsons: “That it is disorderly to officiate as a minister on the LORD’S day, to those who belong to this and other churches; and that they signify to him, that as a church they are offended with him; that if he

* Extracts, records 1st church, furnished by the Rev. John Andrews, D. D.

† Appendix I.

‡ Appendix II.

do not refrain, it is their duty to exhibit a complaint against him to the church he is related to. They also resolved to inquire into his misconduct whereby he has rendered himself unacceptable to his (former) people.”*

The representations unfavorable to the character of Mr. Parsons, which, by a propensity common to communities of conflicting interests, found a readier currency than proof among the adversaries of the new church, were promptly met and checked by the members, in the following resolutions, viz :

1. That notwithstanding all those representations which have been spread abroad, tending to disserve Mr. Parson’s character and hurt his influence, they are in full charity with him, and from the judgment of the (dismissing) council and his recommendatory letters before them, they are fully satisfied that his religious and ministerial character ought in justice, to be esteemed blameless and unsullied among the churches of Christ.

2. That the church is willing, from the acquaintance they have with him, and the letters received from ministers and churches, to admit him to their communion in good standing.

3. That they look upon him authorized by solemn separation to the work of the gospel ministry, to do the whole work of such an office in any branch of the church desiring the same.

4. That they do now publicly renew their call to him, desiring him to take the oversight of them.

5. That, on his public acceptance of their call, they will submit to him under Christ as their Pas-

* Records 1st Church in Newbury.

tor, vested with a gospel right over the church, to read, expound and preach the word, administer the seals of the covenant and the ordinance of holy discipline, according to the constitution of the church.

The congregation, at the same time, expressed their satisfaction in Mr. Parson's moral, religious and ministerial character, and concurred in the call, promising submission to him in all his lawful administrations. No further proceedings on the part of the church and society, in relation to his settlement, are recorded; and it is probable the rites of installation were dispensed with by the church, and that the complaint against him by the first church in Newbury was relinquished as unfounded.

The separatists from Mr. Lowell's church, now the new church was organized, petitioned for a transfer of their relation to it, and were refused; on the ground, first, that they had violated covenant obligations, and secondly, that the new church had not been established agreeable to gospel order and custom of the churches. They then petitioned the new church for admission to their communion, *without* the usual recommendation; and after long delay, and a conviction that no further proceedings against them were in contemplation by Mr. Lowell's charge, this church received and adopted them.

2. The government of this church, and its administration, is the next topic of distinct consideration. Its founders very justly considering government as an *official* business, no less in the *church* than in the state. provided in their platform a shield

for themselves and their successors, both against a despotic government and a pure democracy. They found the representative form to have existed both in the Jewish and Christian church, and adopted it. To this, they have ever adhered as the most safe and expedient for *them*, in temperate but firm resistance of all attempts to bring them back to congregationalism. They had suffered too serious evils while connected with other churches, for want of a judicatory to which they might resort under their grievances, to expose themselves again to embarrassment; and it is a commendable feature in this society, that though surrounded by a community of different views, it has always co-operated with the church, to facilitate the execution of all its measures accordant with its ecclesiastical constitution. In reply to a communication on the subject of presbyterian government from one of their candidates while under a call for settlement, the church voted unanimously, after candid and mature consideration, "that we still adhere to our constitution and connexion with the Presbytery," adding in the catholic spirit, which they continue to maintain, "we desire to hold ministerial and church communion with such other ministers and churches, as are united with us in the great fundamental doctrines of the gospel, in the same way as heretofore."

The organization of the church was completed by the election of 6 ruling elders, April 7, 1746. In the following August, it resolved to present a request to be admitted to Mr. Morehead's Presbytery; but for reasons not assigned, the overture was withheld until Sept. 1748, when, "at a meeting of

the church collective, after sermon and prayers, it was debated whether all were freely willing to be annexed to said Presbytery. And after discoursing with love and calmness upon it for more than an hour, a question was proposed and deliberately read over three times in the following words, viz. Whether upon mature deliberation the church does consent to be annexed to said Presbytery, in case they can satisfy the elders of this church, respecting their coming off from the other Presbytery to which they formerly belonged, appear really desirous of receiving us—make no difficulty about our choosing our elders annually—don't bind any respecting the form of administering and receiving the sacraments,*—appear to be hearty friends to the great doctrines of the gospel, as contained in the Westminster confession and catechisms, and to the power of godliness.

Voted in the affirmative, no man opposing it."

From that period, this church has been known as the first presbyterian church in Newburyport, and was generally represented in Presbytery.† It was not, however, until the year 1802, that it form-

* Alluding probably to sitting at table, and the ancient custom of requiring tokens.

† Until April, 1776, commissioners were appointed to attend Presbytery in Newbury, Pelham, Londonderry, Boston, Palmer, Salem and Seabrook; and afterwards having resolved to join the Eastern Presbytery on condition they should be required to meet them no further east than Newmarket, nor westward than Boston, the church sent commissioners to Pownalboro', New-Market, Falmouth, (then including the town of Portland,) Tops-ham, Windham, Cape Elizabeth, Amesbury. Seabrook, Candia New-Boston. &c.

ally adopted the constitution of the presbyterian church in the U. S.

Having protested* against the proceedings of the Presbytery at their meeting in Scabrook, and formally withdrawn its connexion, the church sent two commissioners to the Presbytery of the Eastward, with a request that it might be received into their body, and that the name of Presbytery might be changed to that of the Presbytery of Newburyport.

The following is the minute of their doings on the subject, certified by the clerk of Presbytery, as a true copy from the records.

At a meeting of the Presbytery of the Eastward, at Brunswick, May 8th, 1776, a supplication from the presbyterian church in Newburyport was presented by Mr. J. Pearson their elder, and read, shewing that said church is constituted according to the presbyterian platform, and now unconnected with any regular judicatory, having by solemn declination, publicly and expressly withdrawn from the late Presbytery of Boston, and praying for reasons therein mentioned, that the said church and congregation with its Rev. Pastor, may be received into special watch and care of this Presbytery as a member of said body.

This Presbytery knowing the said church to be a regular presbyterian society, and worthy of an honorable standing among the churches of Christ, cheerfully consented to receive it, and their elder being commissioned to act in their name, was called up; the constitution of this Presbytery was read

* Appendix m.

to him, and he acceded thereto. Whereupon the formula was presented and signed by him, in the name and behalf of his church and pastor, as follows, viz. :

I do hereby solemnly declare that I believe the doctrines contained in the Westminster confession and larger and shorter catechisms to be founded upon and agreeable to the word of God, and as such I acknowledge them for the confession of my faith; and the plan of government contained in the directory thereto annexed, to be for substance agreeable to said divinely revealed standard, and to it I promise to conform. And I also engage subjection to the discipline of the church of Christ in all its parts, in this Presbytery, and any other judicatories with which it may be connected in the LORD.

Given under my hand,

JEREMIAH PEARSON.

Whereupon the said church and congregation with its pastor is received as a member of this body; and he took his seat accordingly.

In April, 1775, a proposal was sent down to the churches for their approbation of a plan to form a Synod as the highest judicature of the presbyterian churches in New-England, until a general assembly should be formed; taking the standing rules of the church of Scotland, as contained in Stewart's collections, for their rule of discipline, so far as local circumstances would allow, and praying the friendship and acknowledgment of the Synod of New-York and Philadelphia in christian and ministerial communion and correspondence.* The

* To accomplish this object, it was proposed that the Boston Presbytery should be thus divided :

The Rev. Jonathan Parsons, Dr. Whitaker, Samuel Perley,

decision on the question of establishing the proposed Synod was to be had at Seabrook, May 31, 1775. *Against* the scheme as proposed, the session voted to object, excepting to six articles, in the plan of union proposed.

At a convention of delegates from the Presbyteries of New-England at Dartmouth college chapel, Aug. 24, 1792, viz. the first Presbytery of the Eastward, the Associate Reformed Presbytery of New-England and the Grafton Presbytery, the attempt to form a Synod was renewed, preliminary articles of union submitted to the Presbyteries, and ordered to be sent down to their respective churches for consideration, and the whole subject referred to a convention to be assembled at Pembroke in the following June. On the subject of this proposed union, the session declined to deliberate and to act, the church being then without a pastor.

To the proposed division of the Londonderry Presbytery sent down to the churches in 1825, the session, after a free conference with the church

Alexander M'Lean and Thomas Pierce, with their congregations, and also the congregation of Boston, now under the care of this Presbytery, with the other vacancies in their bounds, together with the Rev. Benjamin Balch, shall be the Eastern Presbytery, called the Presbytery of Newburyport.

Messrs. David M'Gregor, Daniel Mitchell, Simon Williams and John Strickland, with their congregations, together with the vacancies under their care, shall be the middle Presbytery, called the Presbytery of Londonderry.

That Messrs. John Houston, Moses Baldwin, with their congregations, together with the congregations of Blanford, Pelham and Colrain, also Messrs. Aaron Hutchinson, Nathaniel Merrill, George Gilmore and Joseph Patrick, be the Western Presbytery called the Presbytery of Palmer

collective, unanimously acceded, and the Presbytery having consented to a two-fold division, the measure waits only the approbation of the Synod at its next stated meeting.

In the administration of the government of this church, it would be strange if, in circumstances so peculiar, no errors had been committed nor irregularities practiced: and it is due to its numerous officers* to say, that they appear to have officiated with diligence and fidelity; and having ruled well, were fitly accounted worthy of double honor. Some of the early acts of session, and usages of the church were the obvious result of inexperience, and want of the standards, difficult at that time to be obtained. Their call of a deposed minister—their assumption of independence of the judicatory with which they were connected—their reception of members of other churches without the consent of such churches—making a *public* relation of religious experience an indispensable condition of admission to church privileges—a confession of *particular* sins committed before a profession of repentance—and I may add, the practice of admitting the children of unbelievers to the sacrament of baptism, will doubtless be generally viewed by others, as it is now by the church itself, as both inexpedient and unwarrantable. To some of these practices of the church, the successor of Mr. Parsons objected before his acceptance of their call; particularly, allowing the elders to administer the government without ordination; laxity in admitting members to the sacraments, and in enforcing catechetical instruction, &c.; all which objections

* Appendix iv.

were obviated by a resolution of the session expressing its desire of a reform. On the subject of baptism, sundry resolutions* were adopted in Aug. 1782, which promised a remedy for the evils of a practice involving a church in inextricable difficulties. Resolutions, however, which appear well on the record, like the wholesome civil laws which adorn the statute-book, do the government little honor and the people little benefit, if never carried into effect. After frequent conference and much discussion, a committee was appointed to consider, and report, what is necessary to be done for the glory of God, and the true interests of his church in a right administration of government and discipline. Nearly 40 years elapsed before the contemplated reform was fully effected.†

Generally, notwithstanding, the spiritual interests of the congregation were faithfully pursued, and the administration characterized by impartiality, gentleness and zeal. Mindful of the trust reposed in them, the elders kept a strict guard over the purity of the church ; explaining to can-

* Appendix v.

† It ought, perhaps, to be noted that a number of the session very faithfully urged such reform, appealing to the views of Mr. Edwards, among other divines, and the practice of many churches, as well as to their own previous resolves. To which were opposed the objections, that this church throughout Mr. Parson's day, and during the revival of religion, continued the practice ; and that circumcision was positively commanded without respect to qualification in the parent ; and after the renewed discussion of the subject in 1787, it was resolved, that an assent to the doctrines, &c. with a sober life, was sufficient for admitting baptized persons to sealing ordinances.

didates for communion the obligations of the covenant, enquiring strictly into their morals, and suffering none to be hastily received.

By a resolution of session 1780, an exemplary regard to the law of the sabbath was enjoined, and against public breaches of it, a solemn protest entered on the record ; particularly the habit of standing and talking about the meeting house, before the commencement of public worship. No species of visible immorality escaped rebuke. Neglect of family worship, rash judging one of another, and especially of the pastor ; misconduct towards parents ; connivance at other men's sins, unnecessary absence from public worship, and countenancing disorderly preachers, are among the sins of professors whose reproof stands recorded, in evidence of the fidelity of the administration. It was ordered by session, that every member take special care to strengthen his brother's hands in the faithful discharge of the common trust ; and the better to fulfil this duty, each elder had a portion of the people assigned him as his particular charge, and bound himself to seek, assiduously, in his district, the spiritual interests of the congregation. They acted like men, habitually governed by a sense of accountableness to God, and actuated by a faith producing the legitimate fruits of love to men. Under such culture, this garden of God was arrayed in beauty, the plants of righteousness sent forth vigorous shoots and brought forth fruit in their season. But not *always* thus. The spirituality and activity, the intimate communion in love, the prayerfulness, self denial and holy zeal, by which the earlier members of the church were

distinguished, were less apparent in their successors. When I compare in point of religion, the members departed, with those who have arisen to fill their places, there appears no greater resemblance than was once found between the first temple and the second.*

The session did not *confine* its efforts for the prosperity of Zion, to this congregation. Many attempts were made to excite a spirit of missions, in behalf of the destitute settlements, and to supply the waste places on the eastern border, though, for want of co-operation in other churches, less was effected than attempted. Through the importunity of the session with Presbytery, one of the benevolent societies in Boston was at length prevailed upon to petition the General Court on the subject, and something was done for the relief of the destitute. The plan, also, of aiding indigent young men, in their education for the ministry, recommended by Presbytery in 1783, met with encouragement in session, and a subscription was long kept open for this object in the hands of the pastor and each elder, not without success. For in all well concerted measures to promote improvement abroad, no less than for the maintenance of religious institutions at home, the congregation has liberally co-operated; and God forbid it should ever lose its claim to so honorable a commendation.†

To the evidence already before us of the intense solicitude with which the government watched for the spiritual welfare of the congregation.

*Murray's sermon, funeral of Elder Cross.

† Appendix vii

and waited for the coming of the Son of man to appear in his glory, may be added the address to the congregation in January, 1747,* and the resolution of 1775.†

The address of the elders, also, on resigning their charge in 1781,‡ though too long to be repeated at this time, furnishes ample proof of their conscientious regard to the interests of the congregation, and is worthy of solemn review by the present generation.

The prompt and unwearied efforts of the session to supply the pulpit in every exigence occasioned by the inability or absence of the pastor, and to provide a successor on his removal; their pressing appeals to individuals and to Presbytery, and their long and expensive journeys and extensive correspondence to effect these objects, bear honorable testimony both to their personal piety, and official fidelity.||

In concluding these topics, the origin, government and administration of this church, we cannot forbear to testify, that its founders and officers were men of sound, independent and resolute minds, as well as upright hearts; and it is remarkable, not so much that they fell into some mistakes, as that, under all their disadvantages, and without any assistant church or pastor to guide them, they should have so well succeeded in es-

*Appendix VII.

†Appendix VIII.

‡Appendix IX.

|| Letters and messengers were sent to President Styles, Dr. Sproat of Philadelphia, and to Gen. Parsons, the commander of the brigade in which Mr. Timothy Dwight was chaplain, earnestly intreating their aid in procuring them a suitable successor to Mr. Parsons.

establishing and maintaining the rights and interests, the principles and privileges, of a church, then singular in its views both of the power of religion and the form of its government.*

Their character, however, will develop itself still more clearly, especially their fortitude and perseverance, under the next topic.

3. The trials of the church and congregation.

Their's was a courage begotten by the fear of GOD, and the love of righteousness. It regarded not men but principles; and in contrast with that which moves the worldly warrior, and magistrates superior to the laws, encountered obloquy for conscience sake, regardless of popular clamor and of honor from men.

Of all their trials, those were the most severe, and not least honorable to themselves, which attended and followed their efforts for their organization and establishment as a distinct religious community. Destitute of such an administration of divine ordinances as they conscientiously coveted; deprived of the liberty to which they believed all men entitled by the Gospel, and held by the laws of the province to contribute to the support of such an administration, and by the acts of the churches to submit without resistance to what they deemed an erroneous ministry; surrounded by men of dissimilar views, and stigmatized by

*According to the primitive constitution of the New England churches, ruling elders were commonly attached to each congregation, but this office grew into disuse in most churches in about half a century.

Winthrop's History New-England; note by Savage, page 31.

their brethren as fanatics,† their character and condition presented nothing enviable to any other than an eye of faith. It was a state in which commiseration and sympathy would have been more creditable to their brethren than the imposition of those terms of reproach which were fastened on them by the professed advocates of liberty of conscience. They shared, however, only the common lot of men who will live Godly in Christ Jesus, and who, in despite of ridicule, are happy in the assurance that the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon them. It happened accordingly, that they took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, and found pleasure in necessities and reproaches for Christ's sake; being, after they were illuminated, made a gazing stock and a hissing, and compelled like the apostles, to become fools in glorying. But while others mocked and misrepresented, they gave themselves continually unto prayer, refusing to be partakers in other men's sins.

To the oppressive statute alluded to, and the vexatious prosecutions, imprisonments and exactions, which grew out of it, they long submitted, contributing to the support of a ministry unacceptable to them, at the same time they were incurring no inconsiderable expense for the maintenance of public worship, under a ministry of their choice. Tired with legal oppression, they petitioned Presbytery in 1773, to make application to the General Court, that they might be placed, in regard to taxation, on a footing with episcopalian, friends,

† They were commonly designated by the terms, New-Lights, Separatists, Schemers, and Ranters.

baptists, and other religious denominations in the colony. In little more than a century from the arrival of the *Hector*, with Mr. Parker and his people, this little portion of the boon for which they left their native country, was obtained by their descendants, for *this* congregation.*

To the redress of their wrongs on the subject of taxation, succeeded a serious dissension among themselves. A contention, very common in the churches at that day, arose on the subject of an innovation in the mode of conducting their psalmody. A subject, which, though not unimportant as a matter of taste, is far more worthy in the light through which *they* viewed it, of all the solicitude which it obtained. But it became unhappily blended with feelings not of a devotional character, and an occasion of greater perplexity and embarrassment to the congregation, than almost any other by which it was agitated. The animosity and alienation of feeling which it produced, I shall not attempt to describe. The wisdom of Solomon, it is obvious, was not in it; and whoever will be at the pains to search through the history of the contest, will find his counsel on the subject of contention among brethren, very powerfully and feelingly enforced. Frequent applications were made to the government of the church by the contend-

* The Puritans, says Clarendon, (Hist. Eng.) finding it impossible to enjoy the free exercise of their religion in England, shipped themselves off for America, and there laid the foundation of a government which enjoyed the most perfect liberty, civil and ecclesiastical.

Mr. Parker arrived in 1633; Newbury was incorporated in 1635; this society in 1756; Newburyport in 1764, and the first presbyterian church in 1815. Appendix x.

ing parties, and repeated attempts at conciliation by session, without success. The innovators at length triumphed, and peace and harmony were restored. At this distance of time it may be safe to say, that though *every* alteration in the ancient modes of worship is not an improvement, the conflict on this topic, as regards *one* of the points of difference, terminated in a victory of good taste over custom and prejudice.

After a period of tranquillity, the church and society were called, 1772, to severe and complicated affliction, by the illness and suspension of the labors of Mr. Parsons. The measures adopted by the session for their relief, did not entirely meet the views of the congregation or pastor. A plan was concerted for providing him a colleague, and application privately made to Mr. Murray, which for seven specified reasons he declined to encourage. The subject, however, was long agitated, and in Sept. 1774, a call made out and addressed to Boston Presbytery.* But some influential members of this congregation were opposed to him. He himself was indisposed to leave his people. A cotemporary call was in his hands from a church in Boston, and the Presbytery, as the church soon learned, were not in fellowship with their pastor elect. The application, notwithstanding, was renewed, and his consent to the measure urged by the considerations of the partiality of the pastor and congregation, generally, for *him*; the enlarged sphere of usefulness which would be opened to him; the danger to which the purity of the faith and govern-

* Appendix xi.

ment of the church would be exposed without an able defender; and his paramount obligation to the church catholic. To this application, the fifth of the kind which he had received, as he stated in his reply, he answered, that he would consent to be at the disposal of Presbytery. In this state of suspense the congregation remained until the death of Mr. Parsons, July 19, 1776. In support of the call to Mr. Murray, the commissioners had been heard before the Presbytery of the Eastward at their session in Brunswick the May preceding. It had been sustained as regular and presented to Mr. Murray for consideration, and the church at Booth-Bay notified to appear at the next meeting and shew cause "why the prayer of the said call should not be granted." After the death of Mr. Parsons the church became more importunate, and prepared the following memorial to Presbytery:

"To the first Presbytery at the Eastward:

REV. SIRS,—Let the importance of the cause and the warmth of our affections to promote the interests of Christ's church catholic, and especially that part of it regulated by the form of government which is presbyterian, apologize for our intruding upon you. Since our application to this judicature for the removal of the Rev. John Murray of Booth-Bay to the pastoral care of this congregation, this session, as well as the other parts of our society, have had an opportunity to make ourselves acquainted with Mr. Murray's personal and ministerial qualifications, for so critical, and allow us to say, important a part of Christ's vineyard as this is.

Our Elijah under the great head of the church has been taken away, since our above mentioned

petition was presented, and therefore we stand in more eminent need of an Elisha to fill up the wide breach which God in his righteous providence has been pleased to make. Critical indeed is our situation while surrounded with those from whom we have dissented in point of doctrine and government, and who are watching for our halting.

While intestine enemies daily discover their secret machinations to overthrow our excellent constitution—added to this the gloomy prospect of our fathers, the first founders of this church, who have been the barriers under God, against that torrent of opposition, and we may say persecution, that this church has met with, are now just tottering upon the brink of the grave; and if these things have been done to the green tree, what will become of the dry! Many, very many among us there are, that do not know their right hand from their left with respect to church government, which we fear, will be likely to have any, even the most corrupt form imposed on them, that sly insinuation may make choice of. Who then will take us by the hand and lead us in the right way! After solemn fasting and prayer to the great Head of the church, to whom shall we apply but to you, our spiritual guides? Plain and evident it is that any unexperienced youth would be quite unequal to so arduous a task, especially when we consider the multitude* that generally attends at our place of

* The congregation at that time was one of the largest in New-England, and although two societies have been since formed out of it, and other causes have contributed to its diminution, it now comprizes more than three hundred families.

worship, (which number is not altogether composed of the inhabitants of this town, but of the towns in the vicinity,) the impure doctrines propagated, the amazing growth of vice and immorality too prevalent in seaports at this day, and church discipline too much neglected; from hence, is it not evident that none but a veteran in Christ's cause, one that has undergone, in some good measure, what the apostle enumerates in *his* sufferings, would be qualified to fill the place of a Parsons.

We acknowledge ourselves nonplussed after having looked around for old or young, if the subject of our petition should fail us. Our brethren at Booth-Bay have favored us with their sentiments on the matter, but after mature and candid consideration, we cannot but think if they would step aside and view the cause disinterestedly, and fully give in to that form of government we profess to adhere to, they would, instead of opposing, immediately lend a helping hand in promoting so necessary a work for the church catholic. But after all our anxiety for, as we conceive, so able a servant of Jesus Christ as the Rev. Mr. Murray, to stand in the gap at this important crisis, when, to appearance, we are tottering on the brink of ruin, we give over the whole affair into the hands of Him who governs all events for his own glory, praying that you may be directed by unerring wisdom, and that we may be kept in the mean time from sinful despondency."

At the meeting of Presbytery at Newmarket, July, 1776, a remonstrance of the town of Booth-Bay against Mr. Murray's removal was exhibited: also, a remonstrance signed by Jonathan

Greenleaf in behalf of a number of the congregation in Newburyport. A decision of the question was therefore deferred till October, when all parties were "ordered to be ready for the final issue of the trial." The congregation in the mean time having been supplied by a Mr. Kettletas, among other candidates, though still divided in their attachments, voted him a call Oct. 20, 1776. An affirmative answer, promising his "services at least so long as the war should last," was received as satisfactory, and provision made by the congregation for moving him with his family and effects from Connecticut. But through a sudden reverse of feeling, in one or both the parties, the prosecution of the call was arrested, his family sent back, and the hopes of the congregation again disappointed. For a considerable period the pulpit was supplied by the Rev. Samuel Hopkins of Newport, (R. I.) that town being occupied by British troops. And although some few of his tenets were peculiarly odious to the church and congregation, he was heard with candor during the whole period of his engagement. But their object was a *stated* pastor, and the ill success of their efforts, was considered as a frown of Providence. Some conceived it a rebuke for those who opposed the form of government, others for such as were in favor of allowing all baptized persons to vote in the election of church officers; and such as had most violently opposed the innovations in psalmody, traced the marks of God's displeasure to a supposed corruption in that part of his worship.

After many unsuccessful attempts to procure, elsewhere, a successor to Mr. Parsons, the church

again turned its eye to Mr. Murray. A British squadron was threatening Booth-Bay. The town, and especially its pastor, was in jeopardy,* and it was obvious that a suspension of his labors, there, had become expedient. Under these circumstances, the application to Presbytery and the town was renewed, and a proposal made by this congregation to send a vessel, in the absence of the squadron, for the conveyance of his family and effects to Newburyport. Booth-Bay, in a communication to Presbytery, consented to his removal to any place except this, but hither, "on no terms whatever." This exception, Presbytery at their session in Pownalboro', October 22, adjudged a breach of charity to this church, and indicative of a want of respect to the judicature, and ordered the elder from Booth-Bay to give to the clerk of his congregation a copy of the minute in which they stand reprov'd on the records of Presbytery. They further ordered Mr. Prince to supply Newburyport "in case, after the best endeavors of session, no other supply" shall be obtained.

In Feb. 1779, the session on petition of the congregation, renewed their application to the peo-

* From a letter of Mr. Murray to one of the elders of this church, in which he says the commodore has offered 500 guineas for my head, and twice attempted to seize my person in the night, it would seem that he was peculiarly obnoxious to the vengeance of the enemy. I have no fears, he adds, however, from my people, nor from the body of the inhabitants of the country, who, I believe would run every hazard to protect me. Yet the world never wanted men ready to such deeds, It is, therefore, the unanimous advice of my friends that I should remove.

ple of Booth-Bay,* and prayed Presbytery to reconsider their former result. This petition was sustained, and the consideration of the prayer resumed in July following, at the session in New-Market.

After nine year's persevering effort, Mr. Murray's transfer to the pastoral charge of this society was effected.

The ordinary rites of installation were dispensed with by resolutions of session,† that the act of Presbytery was sufficient, and that he should proceed immediately in his ministerial office as the Pastor of this church. He was accordingly received, by vote of the congregation, at a public religious service, June 4, 1781, in which Rev. Simon Williams, clerk of Presbytery, and Rev. Joseph Prince officiated.

But the sufferings of the congregation did not end with the termination of their contest for a Pastor. A very considerable proportion of the neighboring clergy declined affectionate intercourse with a minister who was not known to have been restored by the Ballaminy or Philadelphia Presbytery, both of which are said to have deposed him. This threw back an odium on his character, in which it was impossible his people, however blameless they might have been, should fail to par-

* Appendix XII.

† In session resolved, that the minutes of the Eastern Presbytery relative to the transportation of the Rev. John Murray from, and dissolving his pastoral relation to, the church and congregation in Booth-Bay, and their order to him to accept the pastoral charge of the presbyterian church and congregaton in Newburyport, agreeable to their call and repeated application to that Presbytery, to receive and in the LORD submit to him as our pastor, be read.

ticipate. Their harmonious intercourse of consequence, with many of the surrounding churches during the whole ministry of Mr. Murray, was interrupted. The session, however, having unanimously voted, on his humiliation and confessions,* "their entire satisfaction with his character as it stood," and having expressed with equal unanimity an opinion "that the prohibition of the Boston Presbytery† against hearing him should be taken off," were prepared to encounter the inconveniences which followed. It is due, however, to the church and congregation to state, that they acted on the responsibility of a respectable Presbytery, who had annulled the sentences against their pastor, and restored him to ministerial fellowship. And this too, not on the ground of his humiliation and confessions, merely, but of gross informality, and, as they believed, injustice in the judicial proceedings which issued in his first deposition.

But though deprived of the gifts of many neighboring pastors, the congregation enjoyed more

* The confessions of Mr. Murray before the congregation of Booth-Bay, Newburyport, and the Presbytery who restored him, and which, with additional explanations were renewed, by request, to the Presbytery at Salem, have been all before the public. Only the last has fallen into the hands of the writer of this account. This, and the copy of a letter now before him, addressed to a writer in the *Spy* of 1774, bear marks of sincere humiliation and ingenuous shame and grief. Presbytery, notwithstanding, added their sanction to the proceedings of the judicatory which deposed him, against which measure a respectable minority entered the protest inserted in appendix XIII.

† It ought to be noticed in honor of Mr. Parsons' memory, that while he continued a member of that Presbytery, he scrupulously obeyed their injunction, and denied himself the pleasure of attending public worship, even when Mr. Murray occupied his pulpit

fully the services of their chosen teacher; and while they suffered much, gained more, in their own apprehension, by this unavoidable collision and conflict of opinion.

The close of Mr. Murray's ministry, and the long confinement which preceded his death, were attended with serious evils, which were not a little aggravated by the dissensions to which they gave rise in the church and congregation.

A young missionary* of Lady Huntingdon's school, who arrived in Boston 1791, from New-Brunswick, was employed at the suggestion of Mr. Murray, as his assistant for the winter. A portion of the congregation were captivated with his gifts, and their fondness not expiring with the term of his engagement, they chose rather to give up the often interrupted ministry of the principal, than forego that of the assistant. Without the plea of an erroneous or negligent ministry, but on the equally convenient ground of "better edification," they forsook the ordinances of this church and worshipped in a private house. This irregular proceeding led to a judicial process, which issued in the suspension of such as had violated their covenant with the church, and the measures of session were approved by Presbytery. In April, 1793, they formally renounced the government of this church, and declared themselves independent. This act foreclosed all hope of their return, and as the independents complained, the session felt constrained in their own vindication, to explain their views of

* The Rev. Charles William Milton, now pastor of the 4th church in this town.

Christian liberty,* and to enter their reasons for declining to dismiss them, upon their records.

The death of Mr. Murray, March 13th, 1793, inflicted an additional wound upon his congregation still bleeding from the abruption of so considerable a part of their members. To this, was added their disappointment of a successor in Mr. Samuel Tomb, (a licentiate of the Synod of New-York and Philadelphia,) to whom a call had been given, by the church, 20 to 6, August 22, and concurred in by the congregation in September, 49 to 32.†

An unsuccessful attempt to renew the call in February following, and the state of mind produced by the division, rendered almost hopeless a speedy union in the call and settlement of another candidate. Discord increased, as the importance of agreement became more urgent and obvious, and issued in another separation; as if the children intended to justify in application to them, the language of reproach which had been fastened on the fathers.

The call to Mr. Daniel Dana, given by the church, 13 to 7, in June, 1794, was concurred in by the society, 112 to 10. Against sustaining this call, the dissentients, male and female, presented a remonstrance to Presbytery, in September; objecting nothing, however, to the private worth or public walk of the Pastor elect; nor yet, speci-

*Appendix xiv.

† One of the reasons given by Mr. Tomb, for a negative answer to the call, was the opinion that no council or Presbytery would ordain a candidate, when 76 only out of 248 voters in a society, publicly acted in his favor.

fically, to his religious opinions; but stating, in terms too general to be met, that they were "neither satisfied with, nor edified under" his preaching; and further representing the session to have been equally divided on the question of his call. In consequence of this representation, from a respectable part of the church and congregation, Presbytery, with the consent of the pastor elect and his friends, postponed the decision. Dr. Morrison, the moderator, in the mean time, addressed a peace breathing letter to the two parties, recommending to both a prayerful and conciliatory temper, and an united effort to render light and clear the path of Presbytery to ulterior measures.

On the 19th of November, 1794, Mr. Dana was ordained. But such of the remonstrants as had declared that in *this* event they should be conscientiously driven from their meeting house during *his* ministry, and could pay nothing to his support, were of course dissatisfied. They retired, and without regular dismissal, set up a separate worship. The clerk and treasurer being of the number of the remonstrants, the church was left without records, files,* or funds. These were all duly demanded by vote of session, but during the period of excitement, without a prospect of success.

The remonstrants, in July, proposed the settlement of a colleague with Mr. Dana, as a peace measure, and presented as the man of their choice, the Rev. J. Boddily,† a respectable clergyman, educa-

* The writer is indebted for some important materials for this history, to the honorable act of the late Rev. John Giles, in restoring the files of the church.

† Mr. Boddily was installed Pastor of the second Presbyterian Society in June, 1797.

ted at Lady Huntingdon's college in Trevecca; and presenting credentials from ministers of well known character in London. This gentleman commenced preaching to them, soon after his arrival, in the house of Elder Titcomb. The adoption of the measure proposed by the remonstrants they supposed would heal the breach and prevent all further difficulty. The session, after serious consideration of the proposal, July 24, was of opinion that such a measure could not have a tendency to promote the peace and harmony of the church and congregation, and therefore thought it their duty not to give it their approbation or encouragement. They declined, also, to act on a subsequent proposal of the remonstrants to agree on a mutual separation, adopting and ordering to be recorded a statement in which they declare themselves constrained to consider their brethren as walking disorderly, and bound to bear testimony against their proceedings as an abuse of christian liberty. In that statement, they solemnly charge themselves and their children, never to infringe the order of Christ's kingdom by similar proceedings, nor wound the feelings of a faithful minister of his, in such a manner.

The election of Dr. Dana to the presidency of Dartmouth College, opened an untried source of grief to the congregation. They had buried two Pastors, and from two, of their election to this office, had suffered disappointment, but had never before been called to submit the question of dissolving so sacred a connexion to the decision of *men*. They were now to test their respect for principles, whose practical recognition, they had

demanded of the people of Booth-Bay. The considerations urged on that congregation, namely, the paramount interests of the church, the vow to submit to presbyterial rules, and the obligation of men to merge all singular and private views, in those resulting from superior regard to the glory of God and the general good, had now another application. But the congregation stood the test, and it is a bright page, my brethren, in your history. Let no future transaction be compared with it to your disadvantage.

On the 5th of Sept. 1820, the session resolved, the congregation concurring, to refer and submit the decision of this and every question involved in it, to the higher judicatory. The Presbytery, two members dissenting, resolved on a dissolution, after the 19th Nov. 1820, of your relation to a pastor, who had fulfilled a ministry of 26 years.

To the judicious and self-denying course adopted by the church and congregation in this affair, is to be ascribed under God, its singular unanimity in the settlement of a successor, within so short a period.*

Were it desirable to swell the catalogue of your chastnings, I might mention the alarming and distressing pestilence of the summer and autumn of 1796,† and the desolating fire of the night May 31st, 1811, by which 285 buildings were consumed, and various property to the amount of \$400,000 irre-

* The present pastor was installed Feb. 8, 1821.

† The whole number of deaths in the town, and principally of yellow fever, was 72, of which nearly half occurred in this congregation

coverably lost.* And over all the effects of the war and the restrictive measures preceding it, in which were almost annihilated the means of your commercial prosperity, once, unrivalled in any town of only equal population in our country.

But if your religious character, my brethren, has not suffered amidst all these painful changes; if, as you walk about Zion, and tell her towers, and mark her bulwarks, and consider her palaces, you can say to the generation following, this society has lost nothing of the excellent spirit which was found in its fathers; then let their sons rejoice, and the daughters of Zion be glad, because of the judgments of the LORD, and joy in the GOD of their salvation. Be it as it may, in six troubles and in seven, GOD has not forsaken his inheritance, but has watched over it from the first with a gracious eye, and nurtured it with unsparing hand. Small in the beginning and often diminished by schism, and other indefensible methods of evading compacts, it has notwithstanding been often replenished and refreshed, and to this day remains among the largest and most harmonious of all the congregations which surround us. Those who have gone out and built them separate tabernacles, are not reckoned for aliens by the church, but like a true mother, though she cannot fail to remember "the breaking away of children," she has forgiven their wanderings, and still follows them with her affections and her prayers. The breach between this and the first church in Newbury, after a conference of com-

* The first estimate, necessarily hasty, was \$500,000. Of this amount, those who "devise liberal things" remitted to the town in donations, principally of money, \$104 997

mittees, was healed by the following unanimous resolution, Oct. 1816: "That all misunderstanding and infelicities, whatever, which have existed between the two churches, be buried in perpetual oblivion."

As early as the year 1798, harmony was restored between this and the 4th church. Its concession relating to the manner of separation, and earnest request for the removal of the censure from its offending members, March 28, were received in the spirit of conciliation by the session, and the sentence of suspension revoked.

On the members of the second presbyterian society this church had passed no censure, and the Presbytery having authoritatively dissolved the connexion between this church and the remonstrants, and the society having disclaimed the deed of a former generation, by calling him* whom their fathers refused to the pastoral care of them, no barrier to Christian fellowship remains, nor, while they continue to respect the counsels and cherish the sentiments of their first pastor,† will any be likely to rise. Thus, with a single exception,‡ your fellowship is restored with all the churches. There is much also to awaken our gratitude in review of the ability and disposition which God has bestowed on the members of this congregation, to main-

* Dr. Dana was installed pastor of the 2d presbyterian society, on the 24th of May, the current year.

† "Sooner than these walls should afford protection to a licentious minister, or a congregation debauched in their principles and corrupt in their worship, may the whole fabric be levelled with the ground, or become the habitation of owls, and the haunt of wild beasts."—*Rev. Mr. Boddily's sermon at the dedication of the meeting house in Harris street*

‡ See Appendix xv.

tain an exemplary liberality toward its pastors, its poor, and the public institutions dependant on religious charity.*

3. Our last topic is the character of the first pastors of this church.

The Rev. Jonathan Parsons was a native of West-Springfield; received his classical and part of his theological education, under the presidency of the Rev. Elisha Williams, in Yale College. He graduated in 1779, and within one year, was invited to the pastoral care of a church in Lyme. Inexperienced, and unsettled in the doctrines which are according to godliness, and lax in his views of ecclesiastical discipline, he lacked important qualifications for a teacher and ruler in the house of God. With a precipitancy, often mistaken for superiority to the traditions of the fathers, he renounced before the ordaining council the received platform of the churches in Connecticut, and early led his people to establish a righteousness of their own, rather than to submit to that which is of God by faith.† By these means he was unconsciously preparing the way for his removal when he should be made to understand the way of God more perfectly. The effects of the labors of Tennent and Whitfield, led his inquisitive mind to explore the fields where they had labored and carefully examine the fruits, as well as to review the grounds of his own faith and hope, and to bring both to the divine standard of truth and holiness. This thorough and honest examination issued in an entire renunciation of arminian principles, and pro-

* Appendix xvi.

† Parsons' Letters in Prince's Christ Hist

duced a corresponding change in his administration. To this change, though it was followed with the most happy effects on many of his people, a majority of them were unreconciled, and his dismissal was the consequence. God had now fitted him for a wider sphere of usefulness, and by the recommendation of Mr. Whitfield, who took a deep interest in the welfare of this church, he was invited to its service.

Mr. Parsons was a scholar of various learning, rather than a man of genius. A correct and easy writer, and as his works testify,* a judicious and solid divine. He was distinguished as a preacher experimentally acquainted with his subjects; and his sermons, as several of his hearers have remarked, possess the uncommon excellence of interesting the reader on a second and third perusal. Having himself travelled in the paths of error, he was admirably qualified to detect the wanderer and conduct him out of them; having tried the way of holiness, to confirm and advance in it the trembling and tardy traveller to Zion.

The circle of topics which he discussed in the pulpit was extensive, without any affectation of novelty of matter, and his variety of thought and expression, gave pertinence and interest to all his devotional exercises. He was a diligent student as well as pastor, and if he had less of the equanimity of temper which forms the most pleasant companion, he had more of the sensibility which qualifies the good man to excel in the tender offices of the pastor.

* Appendix XVII.

His correspondence with distinguished ministers in Scotland and New-England afforded him superior advantages for usefulness, and he employed them in subservience to the interests of his people. Zealous, honest, and persevering in his profession, the congregation grew under his ministry in numbers, knowledge and grace; and both among his first and second charge he found a present reward. In the latter part of his ministry at Lyme, about 200 souls were supposed to be its seals, and nearly an equal number, the fruits of the revival which followed his early labors here.* As a memorial of his attachment both to his people and the religious system which had sustained him through the closing conflicts of life, he bequeathed £40 to the society towards the support of an evangelical ministry, in failure of which it was devoted to the benefit of the poor of the town.

Of the character of his successor, divided as was public opinion, little diversity of sentiment existed among his people.

Mr. Murray, a native of the county of Antrim in Ireland, was born in 1742. He received his education at the University of Edinburgh, and was admitted to Christian communion in his native parish in his 15th year.† He came to America in 1761, was settled in the 2d presbyterian church in Philadelphia, May, 1764, and on the certificate, of members of the 1st Presbytery of that city, of his meekness and piety, was well received at Booth-Bay, where he organized a church, of which he was the pastor 13 years.

* Appendix xviii.

† Mr. Miltermore's Funeral Sermon

He was unquestionably an orator, and though not of the first, of no very inferior order. Many of his hearers in their description of him, have been wont to say with significant emphasis, he *filled* the pulpit; that he was a workman who needed not to be ashamed. With the exception of Whitfield, no man attracted a more crowded audience, or held it in more fixed and patient attention through equally protracted services. His ordinary discourses occupied an hour, and his occasional sermons extended to twice that length.

He was distinguished for copiousness, ease and freedom, rather than compactness and correctness. The plan of his discourses* was comprehensive, and though not very perspicuous, for unwritten compositions, coherently filled up. Their application was the part most striking, impressive and abiding. Few public speakers have attained to an utterance so uniformly prompt, and so entirely unembarrassed.† His dignity of manners and courteous attention to all around him, no less than his eloquence in the pulpit, contributed to endear him to his people, and by most of them who survive, he is still spoken of with enthusiastic admiration.‡ His exhortation to the elders on an interesting occasion,|| he enforced, if I have not been deceived, by his own example, “Be ever exerting your utmost for the service of God, and the best good of all the flock committed to you; and be encouraged therein by the joyful prospect, that every breach you heal, every broken bone you restore, every sinner

* Appendix xix.

† Appendix xx

‡ Appendix xxi.

|| Funeral of Mr. Cross

you are the means of reclaiming, and every saint you help to comfort and support in this state of trial, will become a jewel in your crown at the day of the restitution of all things.”

Until disabled by repeated attacks of disease, he was diligent in his business,* and held nothing worth living for, if we may credit him, but the service and honor of Christ, who, he unhesitatingly declared had put him into the ministry. Like his predecessor, he was a man of prayer, and a zealous and successful preacher of the doctrines of grace. So distinguished was he for meekness, good will and patient endurance of injuries, that to *his* example is to be charged nothing of “that narrow, contentious, censorious spirit, which has done such infinite mischief in this place.”† To his eminence in these virtues, God, who makes all things work together for good to his people, doubtless rendered his early lapse tributary. It seems to have been the occasion of his perpetual humiliation. Let it be our prayer that his successors, to the last, who shall learn that affecting part of his history, may also learn the vast importance of the monition, *a bishop must be blameless*. Of his efforts for the advancement of useful knowledge, the means of which had been so limited before the formation of this church,‡ and of his desire for the moral and religious improvement of the community, some

* On his settlement here, he relinquished the characters of Physician, Magistrate and Legislator, in all of which he had acted while at Booth-Bay. He is said to have been secretary of the first convention for forming a constitution for Mass., and in the absence of the presiding officer, to have been called to the chair.

† Dr. Dana's Sermon—funeral of Mr. Moody.

‡ Appendix xxv.

fruits remain. The Adelphi society, particularly, of which he and his successors in the ministry have been severally honored as the head, is a memorial of his endeavours that you might be able after his decease to have this too much neglected object always in remembrance. He delighted in rendering assistance to young men by a free communication from the fund of various knowledge he had accumulated and educated several for the ministry, not forgetting the object in his will.

The last years of his life were embittered by complicated disease and the division of his society, and he was useful to his people chiefly as an example of patience and resignation in adversity. He died in peace, repeating the assurance that his enemies had but increased the frequency of his errands to the throne of grace. Happy we, my brethren, if our faith and charity shall have perseveringly sought at that throne, in the blood of atonement, the forgiveness of our enemies.

Of the character and works* of the immediate successor of Mr. Murray, you have no need that I should speak. He is still a living epistle, known and read of you all.

I have therefore done with the proposed account, and for whatever inaccuracies may be detected in it, refer you for my apology, to the very many disadvantages under which it was necessarily written and prepared for your inspection.

* Appendix xxiii.

All the reflections and emotions which it should excite, in *your* breasts especially, you will not expect me to suggest.

It is proper, however, to remind you that God requireth that which is past ; and wretched he who profits nothing by the lessons of his providence. The LORD will destroy them, and not build them up, who regard not the operation of his hands. Obey, therefore, the injunction in the text, and save yourselves from the character and fate of such an untoward generation. Remember that you owe to those who come after you, what the founders of this society have left to you ; the institutions of useful knowledge and sacred science, the means of social happiness, just sentiments in religion, and the example of a life devoted to the honor of God and the best interests of mankind.

The preceding review forcibly reminds us of the verity, that it is through tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of God. The founders of this church were a suffering people. They were good men, not in such a sense as to be free from sin. Religion is not designed to protect the church from physical evil, nor from the effects of other men's sins, but to try and sustain its militant strength. Pre-eminent in christian virtue as they were, they had no claim to exemption from trials ; no right to shrink from enduring hardship. It is evidence of their calling and election of God, and a mark of the true church, that they never set up such a claim ; that they did not thus shrink when summoned to the good combat of faith ; that

they could not bear them who were evil; and that the weapons with which they overcame, were not carnal. Their piety was but the *occasion*, not the cause of their sufferings; let it not for its accompaniments become the object of distrust or aversion, to their descendants.

The review we have taken, is fitted not only to excite the gratitude, but to strengthen the faith of the godly.

Against all the obstacles and discouragements, with which this religious society has been obliged to contend, God has made it to stand, increase and flourish. What he has done for the past, he will do for the present and future generations, of those who serve and trust him. Following those who went before, in faith and patience, your house shall not be left unto you desolate. Let nothing discourage your affiance, nor alienate your affections, nor depress your hope; and though the waters around the sanctuary should roar and be troubled, and the mountains shake with the swell, God will be your refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Follow the LORD fully, and you have nothing to fear from the enemies of truth or the adversaries of righteousness.

This review confirms with affecting remembrances the often told and often disregarded fact, that this is not our rest. It was not the home of your fathers. Their lives and their graves admonish us that we are pilgrims. Forget it not their children. And you who have now become fathers, prepare to follow them to their lowly bed—prepare to meet your God.

The pastors who first guided the religious views of this congregation, with the thousands who followed or gainsayed, are now testing their correctness in the same blessed communion, or reaping a harvest of remorse in a widely different fellowship. What, of all for which any of them contended, save a pure faith and a holy life, is of any value to them now! What, of all which they have left behind, save their pious counsels, and the virtuous part of their examples, is of any real value to their children! And when you shall have followed them beyond this ocean and this earth, what emotions, employments, and prospects, are to occupy your ETERNITY!

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX I.

We, the subscribing brethren, who were members of the first church in Newbury, and have thought it our duty to withdraw therefrom, do also look upon it our duty to enter into a church estate, specially as we apprehend this may be for the glory of God and the interest of the Redeemer's kingdom, as well as for our own mutual edification and comfort.

We do, therefore, as we trust, in the fear of God, mutually covenant and agree to walk together as a church of Christ according to the rules and order of the gospel.

In testimony whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and seals, this 3d day of Jan. A. D. 1746.

Charles Pierce	Benjamin Pierce	Nathaniel Atkinson, jr.
Moses Bradstreet	Daniel Noyes	Jonathan Plumer
Edward Presbury	Mager Goodwin	Daniel Goodwin
John Brown	Thomas Pike	Silvanus Plumer
Richard Hall	Daniel Wells	Samuel Hall
Benjamin Knight	Joseph Hidden	Cutting Pettingell
William Brown		

APPENDIX II.

For the original platform and covenant of this church and the manifesto with which it is prefaced, the reader is referred to the first book of records, in the hands of the Clerk of the first Presbyterian Church.

APPENDIX III.

To the Rev. Presbytery, expected to meet at Scabrook, &c.
Rev. and beloved brethren,

We, the session of the first congregation of Newbury, are constrained in our consciences to protest against some of the proceedings of this Presbytery, particularly, first, in refusing to receive to occasional communion with us the Rev. Mr. John Murray of Booth Bay, when he offered a very ample and christian satisfaction for those mistakes he had been guilty of in years past.

Secondly ; We are dissatisfied with this Presbytery, for receiving a small number of the inhabitants of Boston, as a presbyterian congregation, connected with us.

Thirdly ; We are dissatisfied with the Presbytery's citing the presbyterian congregation, formerly under the care of the Rev. Mr. Morehead, to

appear and answer for their giving in their declination, thereby making ourselves accusers and judges in the same matter.

We are grieved, brethren, for these and some other things, on account of which we do conscientiously withdraw our connexion with this Presbytery, and cannot look upon ourselves as a part of this body, though at the same time we stand ready to unite with those presbyterian congregations which profess a strict adherence to the Westminster confession of faith and catechisms and directories of church government.

Brethren, farewell ; live in love and peace, the God of love and peace be with you. We wish you that wisdom which is from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits.

We are your aggrieved brethren,

JONATHAN PARSONS, Minister, } In behalf of the church
RALPH CROSS, Ruling Elder, } and congregation.

APPENDIX IV.

Officers of the first presbyterian church from its organization to the present period.

<i>Pastors.</i>	<i>Elders.</i>	<i>Elders.</i>
Jonathan Parsons	Samuel Toppan	Nathaniel Tenney
John Murray	Richard Toppan	Jacob Knight
Daniel Dana	Philip Coombs	Edward Harris
S. P. Williams	Ralph Cross	Daniel Plumer
<i>Clerks.</i>	Enoch Titcomb, jr.	Abraham Noyes
John Brown	John Morss	Jonathan Parsons
Edward Harris	Stephen Sewall	Joshua Pilsbury
Joseph Huse	Ebenezer Little	Edmund Davis
Stephen Sewall	Daniel Noyes	Solomon Pearson
Joseph Moody.	Timothy Morss	Matthew Perkins
<i>Deacons.</i>	Nathan Pierce	Jacob Boardman
Moses Bradstreet	John Berry	Samuel Noyes
William Brown	Isaac Johnson	John O'Brien
Parker Noyes	Benjamin Greenleaf	Jonathan Morss
Samuel Somerby	Josiah Titcomb	William Coombs
Josiah Titcomb	William Moulton	Silas Parker
Benjamin Moody	Jonathan Knight	Jonathan Cail
Daniel Plumer	William Allen	Jonathan Beck
Enoch Titcomb	Nehemiah Haskell	Benjamin Wyatt
Edmund Sawyer	Henry Titcomb	James Kimball
Robert Long	Joseph Chase	Paul Titcomb
Nehemiah Haskell	Benjamin Moody	Thomas M. Clark
Joseph Moody	Benjamin Lunt	Joshua Hills
Jonathan Beck.	Jeremiah Pearson	Abraham Wheelwright
<i>Elders.</i>	Daniel Wells	John Wills, jr.
Thomas Pike	Henry Sleeper	Joseph Currier
Benjamin Knight	Moses Atkinson	Joseph Knapp
Moses Bradstreet	Joseph Huse	Edward Woodbury
Jonathan Plumer	Caleb Haskell	Ezra Lunt
John Brown	Jonathan Greenleaf	Paul Simpson
Enoch Sawyer	James Jewett	Daniel Bartlett

APPENDIX V.

Resolutions of Session August 13, 1782.

1. That the only way of salvation proposed in the Gospel, is on the footing of the covenant of grace.
2. That though there have been many additions, yet there never was and never will be but one covenant of grace.
3. That no person has a right to the benefits of the covenant that is not *in* the covenant.
4. That the covenant of grace contains a promise of life and salvation on God's part, to the person that believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, with all his heart.
5. That by real faith, a person really comes into the covenant of grace ; and by the appearance of that faith, he is apparently in the covenant.
6. That baptism and the Lord's supper are the external seals of the covenant of grace.
7. That as there are blessings contained in the covenant of grace, the real believer, only, has a real right to them in the sight of God ; and the visible believer has a visible right to them in the sight of the church.
8. That infants, during their infancy, have no right to the seals of the covenant of grace but what they derive from the parent.
9. That no person can give any right to the covenant of grace or its seals, that has not a right to them himself.
10. That it is the prerogative of God only to judge of the reality of a profession of religion, yet it is the indispensable duty of every church of Christ, to enquire for the visibility of true religion, when they admit any to the seals of the covenant of grace.
11. That real religion consists in real conformity to the scriptures, and visible religion in a visible conformity to the scriptures.
12. That a credible profession of that conformity is all the church can require.
13. That *that* credibility must consist in a profession of the belief and a competent knowledge of the scriptures and the doctrines and religion therein contained ; in consent and engagement to conform to all its commands, evidenced in the life and conversation.

APPENDIX VI.

No instance is known to the writer, in which church and congregation have opposed each other, or co-operated with *manifest* reluctance, since their original organization to the present period.

APPENDIX VII.

We, the Minister and Elders of the church, having had the sight and perusal of a memorial, drawn up and spread abroad by some worthy and dear servants of our Lord Jesus Christ, in Scotland, wherein a concert of prayer is proposed to all christians of every denomination for the coming of our Lord's kingdom. are well pleased with the thing. and for ourselves

do agree, to join the number of christians already agreed upon certain times of prayer ; and as we are agreed in this among ourselves, so we do earnestly recommend the same to this church and congregation in the manner following, viz. 1. That on every Saturday evening and Sabbath day morning, each particular person by him or herself would spend some time in serious consideration of, and solemn humiliation before God, for his or her own particular sins, and the sins that are most prevalent among the people they are most acquainted with, and those sins in general that have caused the LORD to withdraw divine influence from the means of grace either here or elsewhere, and in solemn, fervent prayer, that God would revive his own work of grace and make his word effectual, to the pulling down the strong holds of sin, and building up the kingdom of Christ ; and that he would give enlarged measures of spiritual light, life, zeal, courage and prudence to his ministers, and abundantly bless his churches.

2dly. That with the same views, and for the same end, this whole church and congregation would sweetly agree together, in fixedly setting apart and religiously spending the first Tuesdays in February, May, August and November, (or so much of said days as each one's business or other duty will allow,) in solemn fasting and prayer; therein joining with our christian brethren and friends in Scotland and other parts, observing the same set times with them, and that for the same purposes.

3dly. That if any particular person or persons should, by unavoidable necessity, be hindered from attending these duties upon any of the particular times mentioned, then that such person or persons would spend the next convenient time that possibly he or she can get from other necessary engagements, in the manner before prescribed.

4thly. That every one would spend as much time at the weekly and quarterly course proposed for religious exercises, as they can gain from other duty and business, and especially that every one would take much time in the proposed quarterly seasons for fasting and prayer, and observe the same with great care and attention.

5thly. That the same rules of duty be observed in manner and form as above hinted at, for the term of seven years, beginning the time from the first Tuesday of Feb. inst. provided the events of Providence should not call for an alteration.

6thly. That upon all the proposed times, every one would join praise to God for the work of his grace in general, and particularly for the liberties enjoyed, especially those of a religious nature, together with fervent prayers for a revival of an increase of grace, for the continuance of our liberties. and for a blessing upon our most gracious and rightful sovereign King George the 3d and all his family ; and that God would preserve us, even the whole nation from the tyranny and arbitrary power of a Popish pretender, and establish to us a succession of pious protestant princes in the illustrious house of Hanover.

These things, dearly beloved, we do earnestly recommend to your serious consideration and practice, and we cannot but hope, if we and you do

carefully observe them, God by his effectual blessing, may make them an happy mean of maintaining a lively sense of God and his grace, and of comforting and quickening his children, bearing down vice, keeping off judgments threatened, and advancing the kingdom of our divine Lord yet more and more among us and others.

We beseech you to remember these things if they are of consequence with you, and never grow weary and faint in your minds, though God should seem to hide himself for a season. Watch against a lukewarm indifference in them—stir yourselves up unto these duties, and put on the strength of the Lord. Be encouraged and confirmed in the truth of the divine promises, and say with the prophet, “For Zion’s sake will I not hold my peace; and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.” If we are engaged in these things with the rest of the Lord’s people, who can tell but the Lord will return and call us by special grace more generally? Who can tell but that he will make the protestant nations, and this wicked land, and this town, and particularly this dear church and congregation a crown of glory in his hand. May he not soon say to us, even to us, that we shall no more be termed forsaken, nor any more be called desolate; but that we shall be a people in whom the LORD delighteth. O! ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence; give him no rest till he establish and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the whole earth.

The above and foregoing memorial was offered to, and their acceptance of it voted by the presbyterian church and congregation, Feb. 1, 1747,
mem. con.

APPENDIX VIII.

The session, from a consideration of the melancholy state of this country at this day, and the great decline of religion in it, and especially among the rising generation, think we have a loud and solemn call to extraordinary prayer to **ALMIGHTY GOD**, for the outpouring of his Holy Spirit, that a general reformation may be brought about, that we may be prepared for a merciful deliverance from the judgments of **GOD’S** righteous and holy providence that are come upon this land at this day; therefore we agree, for ourselves, to meet weekly for the above purpose, at such time and place as shall be agreed upon from time to time.

APPENDIX IX.

To the Presbyterian Church of Christ, at Newburyport, in their annual meeting, April 2d, 1781:

The ruling Elders thereof for the year 1780, wish grace, mercy and peace from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, through the Holy Ghost.

DEARLY BELOVED IN THE LORD,—That the Holy and Righteous Sovereign of the Universe has at this time an open controversy with this land, is too manifest to need proof: and when we consider the sad declension of vital piety, the fashionable neglect of Sabbaths and the public worship of God, the growing contempt of family religion—and even of the da-

ties of justice, sobriety and charity that so generally prevail, we need not be at a loss to find out the cause of it.

These evils we are persuaded have been greatly occasioned and strengthened by the lamentable decline of the ancient holy discipline and government in the churches, some of them being formed upon plans evidently unscriptural and defective: others laying aside, in practice, all regard to the good and wholesome platforms to which they in theory and profession adhere.

Hence originated the awful neglect of the churches in regard to teaching and watching over the children and youth amongst them: from a strange fancy that none are under their watch and care till they offer themselves to it by some public act of their own; and that although it is at the same time acknowledged that the church did covenant with their parents, that when themselves were received, their seed should be received with them; and did actually recognize themselves members of her body, when she admitted them in earliest infancy to the ordinance of baptism. Hence too the scriptural duties of private church members towards each other and towards them that are without; the duties of brotherly and friendly caution and council, of instruction and reproof, have gone sadly into disuse; and the important duty of christian conference, whereby christian fellowship has ever been quickened and maintained, and without which their solemn covenant cannot be truly fulfilled, seems to be almost lost.

And hence in fact it has come to pass, that the solemn charge of church officers, has been but too slightly fulfilled by them, and its nature and extent but too little understood by the people in general; and therefore a backwardness has been apparent among them in submitting to, or improving those duties, when seriously attempted.

The excellent constitution of this church, wherein conformed to that of the presbyterian church in general, has not failed to make suitable provision for keeping up that holy watch in both officers and private christians, which the Lord of the vineyard has built as a fence around it; and in our better days, that provision was not neglected in this church. But of late years, since the health of our late dear and Rev. Pastor was on the decline, and he was thereby disabled for his wonted exertions, and more especially since the righteous hand of God has deprived us of the life of that faithful watchman through various causes, we have seen our walls going to decay; and it has been matter of deepest grief to find this church, once adorned with the beauties of holiness, gradually sinking back again into the gulf from whence the Lord at first snatched it with the arm of his power—the Spirit of God withdrawn—the power of godliness dwindled—the beauty of ordinances defaced—the discipline and government which once guarded them, continually vanishing—the love that once knotted the saints so closely together, greatly relaxed—and the children of God estranged from each other; while at the same time they beheld the enemies of religion making their holds stronger every day—vice and profaneness rising and raging so as to dare to put godliness to ridicule—and openly to threaten, after the few remaining wrestlers are called home, to deluge this land with deism and infidelity on the one hand, and with the madness or enthusiasm on the

other ! These things have constrained our souls to weep in secret ; especially when we saw them so little mended by the awful judgments of heaven that have commissioned the devouring sword, through a course of years, to bring desolation to almost every door : and it is for the guilty share in these transgressions, which we of this church have long held, that so mournful a withdraw of the divine influence has been visible amongst us, and the church so long denied the privilege of a re-settlement of a stated pastor : and although we must acknowledge to the glory of sovereign grace, that the Lord hath lately been doing some glorious things amongst us, by means of his word and ordinances, amidst all our unworthiness ; yet, for many reasons, we have no hope of those means being continued with us much longer ; nor of seeing our share in the judgment removed, unless our hands be first withdrawn from those backslidings that have drawn them down.

After long and serious consideration of these things, we are clearly convinced that it is the immediate duty of this church to be humbled before the Lord for all our declensions—to repent and do our first works—and to endeavor, in the fear of God, without delay, to set heartily about a reformation of whatever is amiss with us ; and not stop short of that purity and order which she once possessed.

To help you forward in this work, we have taken some steps in the years past : those were only such however as were found indispensably necessary at the time ; and they must be utterly unavailing if they be not heartily seconded by you, and rendered effectual by other steps no less important. And as it is the business of this meeting, to call out some of our brethren to go before us in this work for the present year, we think it our duty to take this opportunity, with all humility and deference, to propose to your consideration some things which appear to us necessary for the restoring this church to its former beauty, and promoting the power of godliness amongst us at this day—the which we intreat you to consider as coming from brethren that have long walked with you—to whose heart nothing lies nearer than your edification and comfort in religion ; and who are now (at least several of them) apparently just stepping into the eternal world.

In the first place, as each elder is appointed to a more special watch over a particular ward or district of the parish and all applications to the session that concerns any person in his ward are to be brought forward by him he is supposed to be able to report the state of it to the session at their meetings ; we think it, therefore, very expedient, that each elder should visit the families in his district as often as he can, and endeavour to further the interests of piety among them ; and especially, that the members in full communion, be visited preparatory to each administration of the supper.

2dly. As the ancient and laudable practice of Pastoral visitation has been ever universally the usage of the reformed churches, is evidently a divine ordinance, a service to the faithful performance of which, every minister is expressly bound by his ordination vow, seems necessary, not only to follow up the public ministration of the word to full effect, but also to give the pastor such knowledge of the state of the flock as to enable

him to direct to them from the pulpit, addresses suitable to their circumstances, we would recommend it to the church, to see that practice revived amongst us ; and to do their part that it may never be forgotten in this place through their means.

3dly. It being very manifest that the general ignorance of the nature of religion which so generally prevails amongst the rising generation is, in many respects, owing to the neglect of catechizing ; a mean of grace which is plainly of divine appointment, which has been in use in the churches in all ages ; and which God has graciously owned for eminent good : therefore, we would earnestly intreat you, for your children's sake, of the church, of the truth, and of the honor of God and religion, heartily to join your best endeavours, that every future session may see the faithful and constant use of that ordinance, secured to the children of this society, for the time to come.

4thly. Forasmuch as nothing has a more direct tendency to promote the growth of grace, and to secure the benefits of that fellowship and communion, that ought to be found amongst God's people, than frequent christian conferences well regulated, we humbly propose it to you as a mean of the revival of the work of God amongst us, that each elder be required to take some prudent method to draw the people of his district to attend with him to this duty, at some convenient times and places : where all such as freely choose, may meet together for conference and prayer, under suitable regulations ; and that whoever ministers the word to this church at such times, should be requested to assist at such conferences, when his circumstances will admit.

5thly. Since there may be many cases in which it would not be best for the elder of the district to interfere in person, and many which may be such as to require the joint efforts of more than one at once, to set or keep them right ; therefore, we would recommend it to you, to take such measures as may induce each elder, in future, to choose out one, two or three of the most pious and prudent, in his ward, as a committee of reformation, to assist him in forwarding the purposes of order, peace and edification, agreeable to the long and profitable custom of the reformed churches in Europe.

6thly. We think it would greatly tend to the instruction and advantage of all, if the duties of ruling elders to the people, and those of the people towards them, and to one another, as fellow members of the same body, were openly inculcated from the pulpit on the Sabbath every year, when the persons elected are about to be admitted into their office ; and each party were solemnly exhorted and engaged to the faithful discharge thereof ; and we therefore would propose it to the church, to request whoever shall be preacher here at the time to do that service for us.

These things, dearly beloved, we are moved to propose to you, being fully persuaded, that if, in the fear of the LORD, they be heartily pursued by this church, it will greatly tend to the glory of God, the interest of religion, and the edification of the body of Christ among us ; and if so, is it not the duty of every christian to attempt it ? Is not every member bound to do so, from the bonds of love to God and Christ : of charity to men :

of their express covenant, engagements and the many commands in Scripture obliging us ever to seek those ends, in all we do? And if it is duty to attempt this at all, is it not equally so, to do it with all our might, through all obstacles, at all times, and to make it the aim of all our lives? If so, is it not more especially a duty in evil times? Is it not loudly called for at this day, and in kind, necessary to the removal of the present judgments; and indispensably so, to encourage any minister, whose heart is set on seeing the fruit of the travail of Christ's soul, to enter into a pastoral relation with us? And would it not then be a great sin in us, to decline a duty to which we are thus loudly called? Would it not be a breach of charity and covenant? And in effect, a conspiracy against the church of Christ? And make us eminently partakers in other men's sins?

It is, indeed to prosecute these ends, that the word and ordinances are administered to the church; for this it is, that elders are chosen and called by the church to take the lead in such matters; for this, they are specially set apart to that work, and vested with office power and trust; yea, with all the church's power, in such cases; for this, they are charged to look on themselves bound more peculiarly than others; Ezek. 34. Acts 20, 17, 28. Rom. 12, 7, 8. 1 Cor. 12, 20. Heb. 13, 17. Thess. 5, 12, 13, &c. &c.

We could not, then, deliver our souls, at this crisis, without leaving this testimony of our affection in your hands, when we resign the charge you have committed to us. We hope it will be received by you with the same temper, with which it is offered; and we earnestly pray the great Head of Zion to give you and us all that wisdom and grace which may lead us to take the path which himself will approve at the last day, as an evidence of the sincerity of our endeavours to be faithful in a few things whilst we were permitted to dwell in the house of God below.

By order, STEPHEN SEWALL Clerk of Session.

April 25th, 1781.

At a meeting of the church collective, the above address was read; and after several persons had expressed their minds on the subject, there was a unanimous vote to accede thereto.

Attest, E. HARRIS, Clerk P. T.

APPENDIX X.

A copy of the act of incorporation of this church, may be found upon the record.

APPENDIX XI.

The original call, as signed by the congregation, was among the files restored by the Rev. Mr. Giles before his death, and is now in the hands of the clerk.

APPENDIX XII.

To the church and congregation under the pastoral care of the Rev. John Murray at Booth-Bay:

BROTHERREN AND FRIENDS,—Since we as christians profess to have the glory of **GOD**, and the universal good and happiness of his church as the object of our highest pursuit, we renew our request to you, relying on your strict adherence to the presbyterian government; and since it has been the case of removing a minister from one part of the church of **GOD** to another part of his church; and since we have made trial of several candidates, and all our attempts prove in vain, and we have sought direction of **GOD** by fasting and prayer, do again return unto the Presbytery, desiring them to re-consider their result drawn up at Falmouth, Oct. 10, 1776, and to take the call sent from this church and congregation of Newburyport into their serious consideration again, as by a petition sent from the church and congregation of N. will more fully appear, we do earnestly request your cordial compliance to concur with us, in your releasing the Rev. J. M. from the pastoral care of the church and congregation at B. B. that he may be removed to the work of the ministry amongst us; and we hope those sinister views which so naturally possess the mind, will have no place in your breasts, where the glory of **GOD** and the advancement of his cause and interest, are in contemplation.

By and in behalf of the church and congregation in Newburyport, Feb. 26, 1779. S. SEWELL, *Clerk.*

APPENDIX XIII.

We, the subscribers, members of Presbytery now sitting at Salem, being deeply impressed with concern for the honor of **GOD**, and the happiness of the presbyterian church in New-England, do now enter our dissent from the proceedings of this Presbytery, respecting the Rev. John Murray, and prote stagainst the same.

1. Because there ought not any regard be paid to the judgment of any Presbytery that was drawn up and published against him, without a legal notification or citation to Mr. Murray, that he might make his defence.

2. His affairs have been already inspected by as legal and proper a judicature as this to which he now belongs—and he has been by them restored.

3. He has, in the most free and candid manner, made all the confessions and concessions that can be demanded or expected, to entitle him to the communion of any christian society, or regular judicatory in the church of Christ.

Ministers,
Jonathan Parsons,
John Houston,
Simon Williams.

Elders,
Ralph Cross,
Benjamin Smith,
John Crawford.

Salem, September 15, 1774.

APPENDIX XIV.

Whereas, the session determined at their last meeting, to decide on the case of sundry members of this church, who have separated themselves for some time past from the worshipping of **GOD** with us; before we proceed to any judgment in this case, we would premise the following things: In the first place, we recognize it as one of the chief natural rights of all men,

to worship God according to their consciences; but would observe, that merely in the state of natural religion, no persuasion ought to be considered as the voice of conscience, which is not dictated by the principles of that religion; and therefore, much more under the light of christianity, nothing can be accounted a conscientious principle, which cannot plead the authority of divine revelation.

2. We rejoice in the establishment of our civil and religious rights by our happy constitution, and especially in the generous laws of christianity which make churches voluntary societies, and forbid all sorts of persecution for conscience-sake; yet, we consider these principles so far from being opposite to civil order and lawful subordination in the state, or to that of religion in the church, that on the contrary we view them as confirming of both; and therefore, upon this footing, have ever considered themselves authorized, both by the law of reason and scripture, to form, and freely to agree upon particular constitutions, by which they will govern themselves in their respective departments; and when such constitutions are formed by the voluntary acts of either, they are respectively bound by them. We believe the best constitution either for church or state, is that which is most explicit and certain, fairly recorded and ratified by the contract or covenant of the parties. This is to be considered as their fundamental law, and all after laws are dependent on it. From these principles it is clear, that to bind men who have voluntarily taken this engagement on themselves, to regular and constant obedience to its several articles, militates nothing against the truest idea of liberty, civil or religious; but the reverse is in its own nature contrary to both, and in consequences ruinous to both church and state, opening the flood gates to anarchy in the one, and to schisms and confusion in the other. The grand platform of all churches is the Scriptures—and when a particular church, formed upon this ground, solemnly declares in a standing and public instrument, a summary of the principles of faith and practice by which she consents to be bound as a rule, and her several members subscribe with their own hand the same—then this obligation becomes to all such members a bond of the most sacred nature, as it is not only a covenant of men with men, but also of men with a church taken in the name and presence of God, and as such becomes a covenant with them. Breaches of this bond, therefore, cannot be less criminal in a moral view, than breaches of notes or bonds of merely a civil nature. Among the articles of that covenant upon which this particular church is framed, every member has bound himself, first, to maintain and attend the worship and *all* ordinances of God in it; and secondly, to seek its peace, and avoid all occasions of stumbling and contentions. Hence it is evident that this sacred bond is openly violated, by wilful separation from such ordinances, and habitual desertions from such worship. This is true, in fact, not only of those who are called church members in a particular sense, but also of all such as have owned the church covenant, and so bound themselves by it; but the crime is more aggravated in the former than the latter, because it carries in it the breach of bonds more frequently and solemnly taken, and therefore it is of all, most criminal when found in the officers who are bound to watch and guide the conduct of oth-

er members. It is not here intended to consider worshipping *occasionally* with other churches as included in that breach of covenant, any more than ministers' preaching occasionally to societies not their own. But when these practices are avowed and habitual, the church, however ready to forgive upon proper evidence of repentance, is bound to censure until such evidence appear; first, because the covenant betwixt her and particular members is mutual; and secondly, because therein she has stipulated to them her best watch and care, as well as they to her their regular subjection to order; thirdly, because omission of this duty would be no less a breach of covenant in her, than the conduct calling for it in them. This would involve impiety and immorality at once; and hence, affixing due censure in these cases is not persecution, but justice and charity: and such men seeking for an escape from them by taking dismissions, can be no objection against her proceeding; because, first, no such dismissal can be given while the parties asking them remain under blame, or the churches to which they ask them are not considered as being in the order which entitles to her charity and communion; secondly, because what the church cannot lawfully give them, they cannot lawfully take to themselves; and therefore their taking it over the head of all order, so far from obviating their offences, renders them doubly criminal. This does not infer "that churches are prisons," but only that members in them are bound by their own covenant to act by their own rules; and when they refuse this, that the church are bound on their part, to support and execute the law of Christ's house against them; and therefore, whereas, D. P. & S. H. &c. have been found by the judgment of this session, to be guilty of the aforesaid offences, and some of them with special aggravations; this session, after personal dealings with them in a more private way, to bring them to a sense of their sin and a return to their duty, and after patiently waiting without the appearance of any fruit of these labors, did and hereby do, by the authority which Christ hath imparted to his church, and which the constitution of this church binds her to exercise by the hands of her ruling elders, suspend from the enjoyment of the special privileges to which the regular members of this church are entitled, the several persons above named, until they have manifested their repentance to the satisfaction of this church or its session; and as it is said there are some others of this church in the like case, whose conduct having never been judicially examined by us, could not be properly made objects of church discipline at this time; the session, therefore, resolved to request the pastor in fencing the table the next sacrament from the pulpit, to debar covenant breakers in general terms, and resolved withal that the session will not fail impartially to execute the laws of Christ's house, upon all such as are found avowedly to trample on the same, and that without respect of persons, when their guilt shall be publicly known, and judicially inquired into.

 APPENDIX XV.

The church formerly under the care of Mr. Lowell retaining on its records, the views expressed in the extracts, page 15, virtually disclaims connexion with the first presbyterian church and denies its right to its fellowship.

APPENDIX XVI.

A noble example of liberality was given the congregation by Mr. Cross, one of its earliest and most persevering friends, who, though dependent on his own industry, hospitably provided for the first preacher for three years; bore a great part of the expense in the erection of the first meeting house, and was the principal donor among the seven who presented Mr. Parsons with a valuable dwelling house.

The church, from a very early period, has defrayed the expenses incident to their representation in presbyterial meetings stated and occasional, and with the congregation provided of choice for the judicatories at their meetings in this place, and while not unmindful of the poor of the household of faith especially, has ever united in the annual contribution for the poor of the society without discrimination.

To the legacy of Mr. Parsons, the society by vote relinquished its legal claim for the benefit of the heirs of his son.

For the widow of Mr. Murray, and the education of her son, provision was made by the society to the amount of several hundred pounds; and to the memory of Mr. Murray, who had declined a burial in the tomb under the church, with Whitfield, Parsons and Prince, erected a marble monument.

Without his solicitation, the salary of Mr. Murray's successor was doubled by vote of the society for several years in succession, and increased in one year, in consideration of his expenses, as commissioner to General Assembly, to eleven hundred dollars.

During the ministry of the present pastor, contributions have been made by the congregation, to almost every charitable object, within its reach, without invidious regard to sect, complexion, or nation, to an amount rather exceeding, than falling short of \$700 annually; although it is neither the first nor second in pecuniary ability.

Through members of the female bible class and other contributors of both sexes in the congregation, the pastor has received membership in most of the charitable societies worthy the patronage of a christian public; and it is chiefly from respect to their motives, that he contents himself with the expression of his gratitude on so obscure a page. Than *his* praises, and the public gaze, they have a higher reward.

APPENDIX XVII.

Printed works of Mr. Parsons.

1. Letters in the Christian History.
2. Sermon at the Boston Lecture, 1742.
3. Good News from a far country, 7 discourses, 1756.
4. Rejoinder to R. Abercrombie's remarks on a fair narrative of the proceedings Presb. of Boston, against himself, 1758.
5. Sermon on connexion between true godliness, &c. 1759.
6. Manna gathered in the morning, sermon, 1761.
7. Infant Baptism from heaven, 2 discourses, 1770.

8. Sermon on the death of Rev. G. Whitfield, 1770.
9. Controversial letter to Smith on baptism.
10. Freedom from Civil and Ecclesiastical Tyranny, 1774.
11. 60 Sermons, 2 vols. 8vo. posth. 1780.

 APPENDIX XVIII.

See Seale's funer. ser. prefixed to Mr. Parsons' vols. The sermon of Mr. Murray occasioned by Mr. Parsons' death, the church was unable to procure. I could not furnish a copy, he replied to its request unless "I were in the same desk, he ore the same people, on the same occasion, and in all the same circumstances of body and mind."

 APPENDIX XIX.

Printed works of Mr. Murray.

1. Last solemn scene, with an advtsmt. Bost. 1763.
Reprinted. Newb. 1793.
2. Appeal to the imp. pub. in behalf of the oppressed, Salem, 1770.
3. Ser. on the death of Mrs. P. Lane, 1781.
4. Thanksgiv. for peace, 1783.
5. Ser. fun. Capt. J. Parsons, 1785.
6. Bathkol, 1 vol. by Comm. Presbyt. 1788.
7. Three Ser. on justification, 1788.
8. Ser. fun. Mr. Ralph Cross, 1788.
9. Origin of evil, 1790.
10. Ser. on the death Rev. J. Prince, 1791.

As the lists of Mr. Parsons' and Mr. Murray's works have been collected from oral as well as written and printed sources, they are, no doubt, in several respects imperfect.

 APPENDIX XX.

The following anecdote, still current, exemplifies the remark. One of his early opposers, as he entered the place of worship with Mr. Parsons, gave him a text for the lecture, as a test of his qualifications for the ministry. The preacher laid aside his preconceived sermon, and discoursed with such ability as disarmed prejudice, and called forth the extravagant saying of Mr. Parsons, that he had not been surpassed since the days of the apostles.

 APPENDIX XXI.

The following inscription on his monument, expresses the sentiments entertained of his character by his people :

Pause reader,
and
silently muse over the remains
of a Man,
in whom were united the tender Husband,
the faithful Father, the instructive Companion,

the obliging Friend,
 the animated Preacher,
 and
 the able defender of the Christian cause ;
 whose death was triumphant.

—
 APPENDIX XXII.

For several years the town of Newbury had no instructors but its pastors. The first school house was built in 1639. and the salary of the teacher, the use of 4 acres of upland and 6 of salt marsh.

The first grammar school was opened, 1675, and four years after, when the number of voters had increased to 200, the salary, fixed by order of general court, was £60.

That the means of instruction were very limited or very partially enjoyed, may be inferred also from the fact that a large proportion of subscribers to the covenant were unable to write their names.

The following is an exact transcript from the records of the first church in Newbury :

Newberry the 9 dy of September 1696 then mr christopher toppan was or deand pastour of the chorth of christ at Newberry by messingars of fieve chorthes Ipswith Wenham Rowly bradford haverhill their was six elders William hubard : Zechariah sims Joseph gearish—paly—benie-men Rolfe John Rogers ; and their was two of the messingars which were justissis : Nathanwell Saltonstall and Thomas wade—and four Justissis moore present Robard Pike, domil parce dudly bradstreet Simon wainwright ; Tristram Coffin

Clerk

—
 APPENDIX XXIII.

The printed works of the third pastor of the church, are Addresses 4, Discourses and Sermons 32.

FINIS.

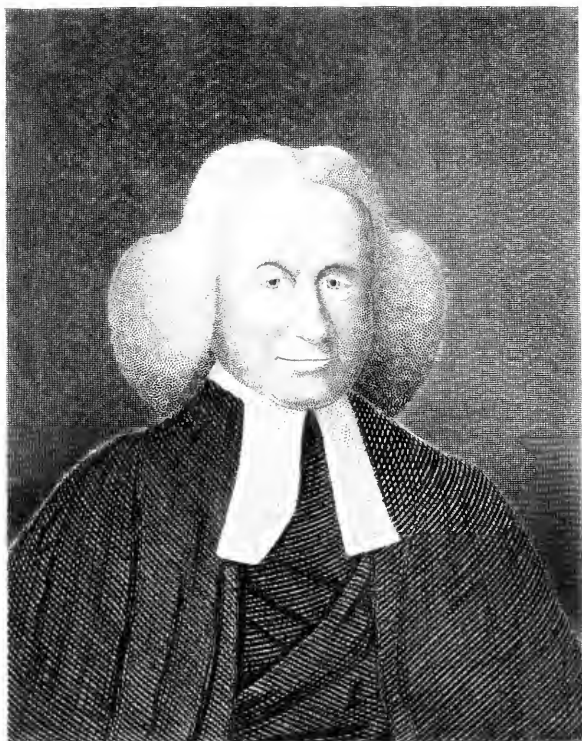
The reader will observe that some of the articles in the appendix should have been placed among the marginal notes, and several documents in the text among those in the appendix.

He will also notice the following typographical errors, viz :

Page 9, line 20,	overweaning	instead of	overweening
15,	22,	agreeable	agreeably
21,	27,	these	the
38,	6,	their	the
39,	7,	congragation	congregation
44,	2,	dependant	dependent.
60,	7,	chatechizing,	catechizing.

REV. MR. STEARNS'

HISTORICAL DISCOURSE.



A

HISTORICAL DISCOURSE,

COMMEMORATIVE OF THE ORGANIZATION OF THE

First Presbyterian Church,

IN NEWBURYPORT,

DELIVERED AT THE

FIRST CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION, JAN. 7, 1846.

BY JONATHAN F. STEARNS, PASTOR.

NEWBURYPORT:
PUBLISHED BY JOHN G. TILTON.
1846.

NEWBURYPORT, JAN. 15, 1846.

REV. AND DEAR SIR:

The undersigned, a Committee of the First Presbyterian Society, would express to you their sincere thanks for the very interesting and instructive Discourse, delivered by you on the recent Centennial Anniversary, and would respectfully request a copy of the same for publication.

Hoping that you may accede to our wishes, we are, Dear Sir, with sentiments of respect,

Truly Yours,

MOSES PETTINGELL, }
EZRA LUNT, } *Committee.*
ROGER S. HOWARD, }

THE dates, uniformly given in the following narrative, prior to 1752, are, as respect the month and day of the month, in the Old Style. This was thought to be, on the whole, the preferable method, as the dates could, in this way, be seen at once to correspond to those of the documents from which they are taken. It will be very easy, however, for the reader to reduce them to the present mode of reckoning, by adding, in each instance, eleven days to the date given. Thus the date of the organization of the Church is given, in the Church Records, and in the present narrative, as the 3d of January. According to the present reckoning, the true anniversary of that event is on the fourteenth. The same reduction must be applied to the events which follow.

In preparing this discourse the authorities relied upon have been, 1st, the Records and files of the Church. 2d, a manuscript statement, supposed to have been presented to the Legislature of the State, containing copies of votes of the First Church in Newbury, and correspondence between the aggrieved of that Church and the pastor, with the result of the ex parte council, called by the aggrieved. 3d, a copy of the result of the ex parte council, subsequently called by the Church and pastor. 4th, the ecclesiastical files of the State, containing petitions and remonstrances from the different parties, and the originals of a somewhat extended correspondence between the aggrieved of the third Church in Newbury and their pastor. 5th, the Records of the First and Third Churches. 6th, the manuscript journal of the Rev. Jonathan Parsons. 7th, a manuscript collection of letters written by Mr. Parsons, and now in the possession of some of his descendants. 8th, Prince's Christian History, Tucker's "Brief Account," and a variety of miscellaneous pamphlets and volumes.

The author would tender his sincere thanks to the Clerks of the First Church in Newbury and the First Church in Newburyport, for their politeness in allowing him the use of their Records. Also, to Joshua Coffin, Esq. and others, for valuable documents furnished by them.

DISCOURSE.

PSALM lxxviii: 2—7.

I will utter dark sayings of old, which we have heard and known and our fathers have told us; we will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord and his strength and the wonderful works that he hath done; for he established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children; that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born, who should arise and declare them to their children; that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments.

THE passage of Scripture just recited, no less than the present occasion, invites us to review and remember, that we may transmit to those who come after us, the history of God's goodness to us as a people.

The planting of a Church and the gathering of a religious society, are among the most important events in the history of any community. What influences for good or for evil, will be shed abroad from the fruit and leaves of that tree! If a true Church, established upon true principles, maintaining the faith of the Lord Jesus, and built on him, as its chief corner-stone, how salutary will be the effects of its existence. If a false or corrupt Church—a Church designed to inculcate false doctrine, or maintain the forms without the substance of the Gospel, how deplorable will be the

consequences to multitudes! Such as the Churches are, in a given community, such, as a general rule, will be the character of the people at large.

The Church, whose first centennial anniversary we now celebrate, (App. 1.) had its origin at a period of no common interest. The "Great Awakening," which commenced about the year seventeen hundred and forty, is deservedly regarded as an era in the history of the Churches in New England. Then a change was begun in their character which is felt, far and wide, to this day,—a change which, we trust in God, will not cease to be admired and honored, till the dawning of the glory of the latter day shall dim, by its excess of brightness, all former communications of the light of heaven. As this Church was emphatically, and perhaps beyond almost any other in this region, the child of that remarkable impulse, it seems proper before proceeding to its own particular history, to take a hasty glance at the general features of the crisis at which it originated.

The first Churches of New England were established on the most strictly evangelical foundation. They believed and professed the great principles of the protestant reformation, with remarkable affection and strictness. Their corner-stone was the doctrine of justification by faith only, good works being the necessary fruits of faith, and thereby its evidence, but by no means the meritorious cause of salvation. They believed, as fully, in the necessity of a renovation of the sinner's heart, by which its whole character and tendencies might be changed, the dominion of sin broken, the life of God in the soul enkindled, and the whole spiritual man created anew in God's likeness. This change, they ascribed wholly to the Divine spirit, working indeed, ordinarily, not without means, but at the same time so employing these, as to impart to them no share in the glory of the great result. True piety, in their estimation,

was a product of regeneration, and consisted, not in any outward performances, nor even in the most blameless outward morality, but in that inward conformity of the heart to God, that love to him and communion with him, of which outward goodness is but the necessary manifestation. Under the influence of these doctrines, preached earnestly by such men as Shepard, and Cotton, and Norton, and Mitchell, and Hooker, and Stone, "the word of God grew and multiplied;" and the preachers, themselves, full of the spirit of their divine message, could rejoice that they seldom preached, without some visibly good effect upon the hearts and consciences of their hearers, and without finding some, who had before been careless, beginning to inquire, "What shall I do to be saved?"

But this happy and very promising commencement was not destined to perpetuate its influence. The spirituality of the Churches began at an early day visibly to decline, and when the first century closed, there was great occasion, as the eye of Christian love looked abroad over the land, to exclaim, "How has the gold become dim and the most fine gold changed." First, there was manifested a great decline of spiritual vitality. Religion became more a matter of profession, and form, and less an experience of the heart. Then the boundaries between the Church and the world became less distinct. Multitudes became members of the Church, who gave no evidence that they were truly regenerate. Church discipline was neglected. Immorality invaded the sacred enclosure. The preaching became less discriminating and pungent. The doctrines of the ancient faith, long neglected, and reduced in the minds of the people to a dead letter, were fast gliding away from the popular creed, and were on the eve of being displaced for another system.

Such was the condition of a large portion of the Churches

of New England, when the great change to which I have alluded broke upon them in its power. Already had the morning star shone forth, in the great revival at Northampton, five years previous, under the faithful preaching of the old doctrines* by the celebrated Jonathan Edwards. But the whole horizon began now to be illuminated. The whole land soon glowed beneath the brightness of the risen sun. Under the preaching of such men as Whitefield and Tennent, men evidently raised up to perform a special work, the impulse spread like electric flame. It stirred to its inmost depths the compact population of the larger commercial towns. It penetrated the interior villages. Churches which had long since "settled upon their lees" now began to feel within them a strange fermentation. Old respectability, proud of its decent forms, began to find the sceptre of its influence loosening in its grasp, and the legitimacy of its long dominion boldly questioned, by a race, professing to have been just now turned from darkness unto marvellous light.

The effect of this new impulse fell, as might have been expected, most heavily on the pastors of the churches. Secure of their support by the aid of the civil law, pledging all the real and personal estate, within certain geographical limits, for the fulfilment of their pecuniary contracts; and ministering to a people, not desirous of great pastoral fidelity, to the disturbance of their slumbering consciences, a large part of them had settled down into a dull routine of Sabbath-day performances, and were spending their week day hours, when not employed in the preparation of their

* It is a fact worthy of special attention, that the same doctrine of justification by faith only, which in the hands of Luther was the life and soul of the Protestant Reformation, was, in the hands of Edwards, the means of imparting the first impulse to that great awakening, which revived to new life the decayed and slumbering Churches of this Country.

hasty discourses, in the improvement of their parsonage lands, the indulgence of their literary tastes, or in friendly correspondence and social intercourse with each other, and with those distinguished men in civil life who courted their society and respected their respectability, or sought to avail themselves, for their own purposes, of their unbounded influence. Many of the ministers of that day, it is supposed, were men who had never experienced, in their own hearts, the power of the faith which they professed to teach. Many had become very sceptical in regard to its fundamental doctrines. And even those who were at heart faithful men, and desired sincerely the spiritual welfare of their flocks, infected to a great extent with the surrounding atmosphere, had become over cautious, in regard to every thing like excitement in religion, and, to avoid offence, dwelt chiefly on those vague generalities, which at best play round the head but come not near the heart.

Upon a clergy so secure and slumberous, the great awakening burst forth like the shock of an earthquake. Some aroused themselves, like the five wiser virgins when the bridegroom came, and made haste to welcome the wonderful guest. Some at first acted the prudent part of bending to the storm, thinking to let it pass over them unresisted, and blow by. Others, really friendly to whatever was good and genuine in the work of grace, were yet alarmed by the evils which attended it, and, perhaps too much influenced by the opinion of some whom they deemed wise and judicious, run well for a little season and then were hindered.

It was not long, however, before the party lines among the pastors of the Churches became quite prominent. When the famous Whitefield first came to Boston, all the clergy there, and in the neighboring towns, with scarce an exception, welcomed him with open arms. A few years

passed, and a considerable party among them had taken an entirely different view of his character and influence. His faults were magnified, his good depreciated. Pulpits were shut against him, and pamphlets warned the public to beware of his fanatical influence.

But it is not easy to stop an earthquake when it has commenced its motion, nor to stay the progress of a hurricane by the rebuke of human authority. The popular mind had been roused, and the excitement could be quelled only by the voice of truth. Unfortunately for those who would restore the calm, truth was mainly on the side of their opponents. The people saw that the new doctrines, were, after all, only those which the fathers of New England taught, which were acknowledged in the confessions of faith of their own Churches, and in which, in childhood, they themselves had been instructed from the Assembly's Catechism. They saw, too, that the effects produced by them, were, in the main, the legitimate results of those principles. And why then should the respected pastors of the churches wish to oppose the preaching of those doctrines, and the production of those effects?

The result was such as might have easily been anticipated. The coldness, which so many Christian ministers exhibited amidst the general fervor, led many to doubt the reality of their own conversion, and the sincerity of their professed attachment to the ancient faith; and what was doubtless true of many, soon began to be asserted boldly of the whole. The cord that bound the religious community together was now broken. The old decencies were despised as sheer hypocrisy. The influence of the pastors was no longer heeded, because the people had lost confidence in their sincere attachment to the cause of piety. Men of more zeal than knowledge now became, in many instances, the leaders of public opinion, and in the

anarchy which must necessarily have ensued, all sorts of wild fire, mingling with the flame of newly kindled piety, burned unchecked till it became uncontrollable.*

Far be it from me to approve the disorders and irregularities which attended that wonderful excitement. There was unquestionably much everywhere which the serious Christian must and ought to deplore. But what is the chaff to the wheat? The legitimate leaders in the sacramental host of God's elect had declined their trust. The battle was for the inheritance, transmitted from the worthiest of fathers,—the inheritance of puritan faith, dearest of all others to the genuine New Englander. It was not so much a revolution, as a restoration, that they were now

* The evils likely to result from the encouragement of ignorant laymen and youth destitute of all proper experience, to usurp the functions of the Christian ministry, were early foreseen and predicted by some of the most eminent promoters of the revival. But they had greater evils of an opposite character to contend with, and this fact neutralized, in a great degree, the influence of their admonitions. It is well known to all who are familiar with those times, that a prominent subject of controversy was the necessity of an educated ministry. The revival party insisted that grace in the heart is of more importance than learning in the head; and their opposers, on the other hand, so magnified the importance of human learning, as to cast into the shade that of personal piety. Both were partly right and partly wrong. It must be said, however, in favor of those who seemed to despise education in their zeal for personal religion, that, of the two, they were contending for by far the more important point. It was the point likewise which, for a considerable time previous, had been most neglected. Had all the educated ministers of the community possessed the spirit of COLMAN, and EDWARDS, and SEWALL, and PRINCE, no outcry would have been made, we may be sure, against human learning in the ministry—certainly no disposition would have been manifested to undervalue it, as an important collateral qualification. But the great dearth of such men at that important crisis, and on the other hand the violent opposition which the revival encountered from some, eminent for their intellectual attainments, produced, in many hasty minds, the impression, that great learning is unfavorable to ardent piety. Hence their confidence was transferred to another class, and the unskilfulness of their guides often led them lamentably astray.

to contend for, not a conquest, but a recovery, of what had been insidiously stolen away, in an hour of forgetfulness. And should the people hesitate? In the absence of their regular leaders, they must lead themselves. In all their ignorance, they must march on, with such a degree of regularity as mere soldiers of the rank and file were able to secure. Who can wonder that there was little discipline among them? Who can wonder that the lawless mingled in their ranks, and obtained at times a temporary ascendancy? Who can wonder that the best disposed among them were chargeable with many things, which their posterity must censure, and which they themselves, when they had time for calm review, had occasion to deplore?

The prevailing spirit of that movement, was, we may not doubt, that of living Christianity. There was, truly, as those engaged in it believed, a glorious work of divine grace upon the hearts of individuals, and a glorious reformation accomplished in the Church at large. Great principles, long withdrawn from notice, and almost sunk into oblivion, were restored to their ancient supremacy. The faith, practice and experience of the puritans was revived. Religion flourished again. And as for the disorders, which unhappily attended its resuscitation, these were soon made to disappear before the power of intelligent and sober piety.

In the general excitement, the people of Newbury, it appears, largely participated. How far the Churches here, with their pastors, had become infected with the prevailing degeneracy, it may not be easy at the present day exactly to determine. Within the bounds of what is now included in the towns of Newbury and Newburyport, there were then existing two Congregational parishes, called the first and third parishes in Newbury; now the first in Newbury and the first in Newburyport.

The pastor of the first Church in Newbury was then advanced in life, and of a peculiar temperament. He set his face, from the beginning, sternly against the new movement. The promoters of it, he did not hesitate to address by the opprobrious epithet of "Schemers," and "New Schemers," which their adversaries had applied to them. He told them to their face, that he *presumed*, they had been inventing falsehoods against him, for said he, "I never yet knew a schemer that would not lie." The name of "new light men," sometimes given them, he admitted might be applicable, for he continued, "Satan being now especially transformed into an angel of light, hath transformed his followers into his likeness, in regard of the new light they pretend unto." He even suffered himself, it is said, on one occasion, to become so excited, as to arm himself with a whip, under his cloak, when he went into the house of God, to scourge out the enthusiasts, as he called them, from the sacred precincts.*

The other Church had been gathered only about fifteen years, when the work began, and was supplied with a pastor, learned, mild, serious, and evidently disposed to be faithful, beyond the ordinary practice of his day, in the promotion of serious piety. A single note, inserted in the Church records, may serve to illustrate his spirit. After recording a vote of the Church, the design of which was to adopt measures for the advancement of their own piety and religious influence, he gives vent to his own feelings in the following devout ejaculation: "God grant success to us in this affair, and by his holy spirit lift up a standard against

* It seems proper, to observe here, that the Rev. Christopher Toppan, above referred to, was supposed to be laboring, at times, under a partial derangement of intellect. The peculiar turn, however, which his insanity seems to have taken, in the above instances, is significant of the state of the times, and of the difficulties under which those who afterwards separated from his Church were compelled to labor.

vice and profaneness, and revive dying religion among us."^{*}

At what precise time the new impulse communicated itself to the people here, and by what means, I am not able to state confidently. Before the arrival, however, of the first itinerant preacher in this place, the records of the third Church, now the first in Newburyport, give evidence of an unusual interest in religious matters, in the admission to its communion in one year, of forty-four persons, a greater number, as the pastor himself then supposed, than was ever known to have been received in any Church in the province, in the same space of time.†

In the autumn of the year seventeen hundred and forty, George Whitefield made his first visit to New England. He arrived in Boston on Thursday evening, September the eighteenth, at eight o'clock, and remained there, preaching in the various Churches, about ten days, when he set out on an excursion to the Eastward. He reached Newbury in the afternoon of September the thirtieth,‡ and preached once in the house of worship belonging to the third parish,

* The measures above alluded to, were the annual appointment of seven brethren of the Church, to be "joined with the pastor and the honored justices belonging to it," to meet once a month and "consider what might be done for the good of the town in general, and the Churches in it," or, as the object is expressed in another place, "to consider what may be done to revive dying religion among us, suppress vice, and promote the peace and welfare of the Church." At the same meeting, the Church voted to meet once a quarter "and renew their covenant with God and one another."

† This is stated on the authority of Mr. Lowell, himself, in a letter to the aggrieved, now on file in the State House. But the Church records show that, during the year immediately succeeding the great earthquake in 1727, which excited so much terror every where in this region, one hundred and forty-one persons were admitted to the same Church.

‡ Coffin states, in his history of Newbury, on the authority of Mr. Williams' historical sermon, that Whitefield first came to this town September 10th. This is a mistake. He had not then reached Boston on his way from the South.

the Rev. Mr. Lowell's, then situated on what is now called Market Square. His own notice of the event is as follows: "The Lord accompanied the word with power. The meeting-house was very large, many ministers were present, and the people were greatly affected. Blessed be God. His divine power attends us more and more." Whitefield proceeded on his journey as far as York, Maine; and returning, preached at Newbury again, on Saturday, October the fourth; when a collection amounting to eighty pounds and nine shillings, was taken up in behalf of the orphan house which he was then establishing in Georgia. In the course of the next winter, the hardly less famous Gilbert Tennent paid a visit to Newbury. On the seventh of January, as appears from a note by Mr. Lowell in the records of the third Church, he preached once in private, and on the next day once in public. A week later, namely, on the sixteenth of the same month, he was here again, and preached in public three times.

During this period, and for a considerable space of time afterwards, Mr. Lowell appears to have been regarded as a friend to the new movement. He made no opposition to it. He admitted freely to his pulpit, or allowed the people who desired it, to admit such itinerant and neighboring ministers as were considered specially active in the promotion of it. He became more zealous than usual in his own pastoral duties, and for a time maintained two weekly lectures, in addition to his other exertions. The result was that, during the space of one year and six months from the preaching of Whitefield in this place, one hundred and forty-three persons were added to his Church, and of these, fifty-nine were admitted on one particular occasion, and twenty-seven on another, both within the space of one month. The Church under the care of Mr. Lowell became indeed the resort of some, from the other parish, who were

disaffected towards their own pastor, on account of his opposition to the work.

Up to to this time, namely, the last of March, seventeen hundred forty-two, we find no evidence of a disposition among the friends of the revival to establish separate worship. But the causes of dissatisfaction were at work. During the course of the very next month, signs of misunderstanding begin to appear, between them and the Rev. Mr. Lowell. The Messrs. Rogers, of Ipswich, were among its most ardent supporters, and being men of high standing in the ministry, had probably found a welcome reception here, as well as others of a similar stamp. Near the close of April, Mr. Buel,* a young preacher who had been laboring with much success at Northampton, under the eye and with the approbation of Jonathan Edwards, came to Ipswich, and, in company with Rev. Nathaniel Rogers, and his brother, Daniel Rogers, then a candidate for the ministry, visited Newbury. Mr. Lowell was absent, and some of his parishioners, desirous of hearing these gentlemen preach, took the responsibility of introducing them into the meeting-house for that purpose. Great excitement was produced by this act, and great offence

* Mr. Buel was a classmate of Rev. Samuel Hopkins, and a graduate of Yale College at the commencement in the preceding September. As was not uncommon at that day, he commenced preaching very soon after he left College, and in the latter part of the following winter was employed to preach at Northampton, in the absence of Rev. Jonathan Edwards. Edwards himself thus speaks of him in a letter to a clergyman in Boston: "About the beginning of February, 1742, Mr. Buel came to this town. I was then absent from home, and continued so till about a fortnight after. Mr. Buel preached from day to day, almost every day, in the meeting-house. I had left him the free use of my pulpit, having heard of his designed visit before I left home. There were very extraordinary effects of Mr. Buel's labors," &c. Hopkins, who was then residing in the family of Edwards, speaks of him as "a zealous preacher of the Gospel, and the means of greatly reviving the people to zeal in religion."

taken, in which the pastor himself seems to have participated. Shortly after, a communication was inserted in a Boston paper, representing the transaction in a very reproachful light; as if Mr. Rogers and his associates, had formed a party, and taken violent possession of the meeting-house, in the pastor's absence. This the friends of those gentlemen denied. The pastor, with his own signature, confirmed the statement. The result of the misunderstanding was, that the next day Mr. Rogers preached in the town-house, being now excluded, as it appears, from both the meeting-houses, and a numerous audience there attended on his preaching.

What direct influence this event may have had on the succeeding movements does not now appear. One fact is evident, however; that the pastor had, by this time, seen occasion to change his views of the propriety of the measures in operation. He had complied with the wishes of those who were attached to them, till the matter seemed, in his judgment, to be going too far. Evening meetings, which he had before allowed, he now began to regard as of a dangerous tendency, and therefore stopped them. Itinerant preachers, he had permitted those of the people who desired to hear them, to introduce into his pulpit; until, to use his own words, "it was plain that any itinerant, of whatever character for capacity and conduct, was preferred," then he excluded them. Meanwhile, the views of that portion of his people were *not* changed. Hence they became discontented. The transaction just related, it seems probable, was the means of bringing matters to a crisis. Shortly after, we find that measures were in operation for the erection of a new place of worship. The building stood upon the North-east side of High Street, between Federal and Lime, and was probably completed before the middle of February in the following winter.

Meanwhile, a young man from the neighboring parish of Byfield, Joseph Adams, a graduate of the same year at Harvard University, and a very recent convert, began to exhort and hold meetings in this vicinity. He was a man of great fervor and zeal, and having entered upon the work he had undertaken with all the earnestness of sincerity, and the freshness of youthful devotion, he charmed and melted by his preaching the hearts of multitudes, who regarded him, in the language of one of his adversaries, as "some great one, the mighty power of God." The imprudent zeal of the young preacher led him to commit some indiscretions. He fixed his eye upon the pastor of a neighboring Church,—a man whom he appears to have regarded as peculiarly deficient in ministerial qualifications,—and with the view of dealing faithfully with his soul, addressed a letter to him, full of severe reproof, plainly intimating that he had never been converted, calling him "an opposer of this blessed reformation," and ending with the hope, that "God would either convert him or turn him out of the ministry," and the prayer, "O that God would bless this letter to your conviction." This letter, which appears to have been intended as a private one, the receiver immediately published, together with a long answer, in which the "arrogant young man" is chastised with no little severity. Notwithstanding this, however, the confidence of the friends of the young preacher appears to have remained unabated, and when the new meeting-house was completed, which was about the beginning of the year seventeen hundred and forty-three, Mr. Adams was employed as the stated preacher.

A large number from each of the two parishes now withdrew from their former places of worship, and attended on Mr. Adams' ministrations. He continued to officiate for this collection of "separatists," as they now began to

be called, with more or less constancy, more than two years, until a Church was formed, as we shall presently have occasion to notice.*

It seems proper, that we should pause here, and inquire for what *reasons* the separation just referred to was made. Fortunately we have the parties' own statements, which will furnish the best exposition of their views.

The separatists from the first Church, of whom, there were, in the first instance, about thirty male members, complained of their pastor, the Rev. Christopher Toppam, that he had departed from the ancient faith in several important particulars, and especially, that he had strenuously opposed himself, to what they regarded as "the glorious work of God in convincing and converting great numbers in our land, of late, and especially among us," and had called it "all a delusion of Satan."

The separatists from the third Church, thirty-eight male members with their families, expressly disavowed the design of fixing upon their pastor, the Rev. John Lowell, the charge "of false doctrine, or what is generally called an immoral life." They admit that his *preaching* was not displeasing to them, "in a time of great deadness in religion, a time when (as we think)" say they, "both the wise and foolish virgins were slumbering and sleeping." But since the great work of divine grace had commenced among them, many, especially of those who had shared in it, had

* Mr. Adams was afterwards settled in Stratham, N. H., where he died at an advanced age, leaving behind him, as a friend informs me, the reputation of a "remarkably good man." The evidence that he remained here as long as above stated, is to be found in a letter from Mr. Parsons, then at Lyme, addressed to Charles Pierce, Esq., and Dr. Sawyer. He says, in the postscript, "I hope you will treat dear Mr. Adams, *your present preacher*, with respect and confidence. He is a man whom I love in the Lord, and I believe he has been very serviceable to the cause of Christ among you." This letter is dated April 18, 1745.

become dissatisfied. They complain that he had of late shown himself "cold and strange" towards the promoters of the late happy "reformation in the land,"—"at this day as you are pleased to express it (to our sorrow) only of 'temptation.' But we think, in honor to the Holy Spirit, it deserves to be called a day of illumination as well as temptation." Meanwhile, they complain, your own preaching was "not so suitable to our experience as we wished and longed for." His discourses seemed to them not sufficiently explicit and frequent, on the subject of man's native depravity, and inability," "the way of salvation by the merits of Christ," "the work of the Holy Spirit," and "the bringing the sinner off from his own righteousness, to rely entirely on Christ's righteousness." They wished the terrors of the law to be set forth in a more lively manner, and the sermons to be "pressed home and pungent," and the preacher himself to be "more zealous, constant, and fervent, in this weighty cause of gaining souls to the kingdom of God." They do not complain, indeed, that they have had nothing of this class of instructions, but they think they have had far too little of it, "especially considering the present day." "And then," they continue, "when you were upon such subjects as fairly led you to speak close, and clear, and distinct, to our case, you seemed to us to glance over or but hint at them, in such generals, as did not reach our case." "And then the improvement, which we consider the life and soul of a sermon, seemed to us to go all over, without touching us." Could they have had such preaching, as in their view was essential to their spiritual welfare, in season and out of season, either by the pastor himself, or by his heartily admitting and forwarding the efforts of such other Orthodox ministers as would preach in that manner, accompanied by corresponding pastoral efforts on his part, they would never

have thought, they say, of separating from him. The want of these, and the like privileges, led them to withdraw.

The irregularity of the proceedings of these "aggrieved brethren," in withdrawing from public worship and ordinances in their own Churches, and establishing for themselves separate worship, without first obtaining a regular dismissal, demands, in justice to them, an attentive and discriminating consideration. They had had, as they affirm, repeated conferences with their pastors on the subject, until one of these "declared he would talk no more with them," and the other, though often appraised of their desire to withdraw, and their wish for a Church meeting in the case, had sufficiently indicated his unwillingness to do anything to forward their wishes. Indeed the policy of the pastors, at that period, seems to have been, to call no Church meetings, and have no Church action on the subject of existing difficulties. One of them states explicitly, that he should have called such a meeting, were it not that he "had abundant reason to fear, the heats and animosities among us might prevent our acting, at the meeting of the Church, with wisdom and for the honor of Christ." Of course, the power of calling Church meetings being then considered as lodged exclusively in the hands of the pastors, it was impossible for the aggrieved brethren, in existing circumstances, to obtain a regular hearing.

As to building the meeting-house, and commencing public worship in it before asking a formal leave so to do; which was sometimes alleged as an irregularity; they supposed they had the best of precedents in their favor. The house in which Mr. Lowell officiated, had been built, it seems, without any such leave given by the first Church and parish, and the persons afterwards organized as the third Church, had not been dismissed for that purpose,

until a considerable time after the house was built, and there was stated preaching in it. . And yet no offence had been taken,—none regarded it as an irregularity.

It is plain however, that the aggrieved earnestly desired, and were determined to secure, if possible, some distinct action of their own Churches on the case in hand. When they separated, it was evidently with the earnest hope, that, by a decisive stroke, the Churches would be brought to a direct and regular cognizance of their affairs.

But the pastor of the third Church, though for the sake of peace, he would call no regular meeting, does not seem to have been unmindful of the exigencies of that trying crisis. On the first day of May, say the Church records, “after the administration of the Lord’s supper, just before the blessing was pronounced, the pastor read to the Church what follows: “Brethren, you are all sensible of the great schism that has been made in this Church, and that a considerable number of persons, under the watch and care of this Church, have withdrawn from our communion in the word and ordinances, in breach of their solemn vows and covenant engagements; and I think it my duty, as your pastor, to move to you that we keep a day of fasting and prayer upon this sad occasion, and seek God’s special direction for the healing of our divisions.” The day was agreed upon and observed accordingly. “The same day,” records the pastor, somewhat mournfully, “the separatists held a public assembly in Mr. John Brown’s barn, in Mr. Toppan’s parish, at which deacon Beck,” one of his own deacons, “was present.”

The aggrieved brethren, now perceiving no probability that the Church intended to take any steps towards a regular hearing of their case, by calling them to an account for their withdrawing, began themselves to move, by a *formal application*, for a Church meeting.

On the thirty-first day of October, those belonging to the third Church addressed their pastor, in the following communication: "We, the subscribers, brethren of the third Church in Newbury, beg your compliance with this our desire in calling a Church meeting, that we might lay before them the reasons of our withdraw, and also our desire of a dismissal from your particular Church, in order to be gathered into a Congregational Church agreeable to the word of God." This was signed by the names of thirty-two male members of the Church. The pastor replied, expressing his regret, that "in this day of temptation," they had been so unmindful of their covenant vows as to have separated from the communion of the Church. He declines calling the Church meeting, until they are more explicit in stating their grievances; for, says he, "they may be such, for aught I know, as to contain some charges against me (though I fear none) or some other particular person,"—in which event he would have them pursue private measures,—"or they may be such as I ought not, as pastor, to lead the Church to consider of."

The aggrieved next addressed a communication to the pastor and Church jointly. It commences with the following frank and honorable confession: "We, the subscribers, having withdrawn from communion with this Church, are convinced, that in not laying before you the reasons of our withdrawing before we actually did withdraw, we have erred, we heartily acknowledge it, and ask your forgiveness therefor." They then proceed to state, generally, that they are not edified by the pastor's ministrations, and again they earnestly desire to be dismissed, peaceably and amicably, to be formed into a Congregational Church. To prevent mistakes, about their views of religious truth, they take care to add: "To your satisfaction, we think, we can heartily and unreservedly subscribe and

concur with the well known body of Divinity among you called the Assembly's Catechism.'

Instead of laying this communication before the Church, according to its obvious intent, the pastor proceeded to answer it. His reply is (in some parts of it) a little pungent. "Whether my preaching," he says, "be as much for your soul's benefit and spiritual edification as that of others, and particularly Mr. Adams's, whom you generally hear, would be somewhat odd for me to determine." He still hopes, however, that he can satisfy them, if they will give him a more full and explicit account of their grievances, intimates that the Church will not be willing to dismiss them, while they are not in charity with the pastor, and have not given him the reasons, and finally proposes to have another day of fasting and prayer in reference to the matter.

The aggrieved brethren now took their turn to be severe. "As to breach of vows," they say, "and all that respects that on our part, we think we have sufficiently acknowledged, and asked your forgiveness therefor." They *retort* the charge. The Church is bound, they say, to call offenders to an account. And if they were regarded as offenders, it was a breach of covenant vows to neglect to take cognizance of their case. They repeat their request for a Church meeting. They see no probability of removing the difficulties by private conference, for they have repeatedly waited upon the pastor, both as committees and as private persons, and without success. They complain, that they have been ill-treated in the matter. They think they shall not make many more attempts of a like nature, unless they have a better prospect of success. In this letter, the aggrieved set forth, in detail, the reasons of their dissatisfaction, and request particularly that the whole should be read to the Church. The pastor replied in a

long letter, going over the whole ground and intimating, that "the Church will not be likely to receive their acknowledgement, while they still refuse to hold communion with them."*

At length, however, the Church met. The result was such as the pastor had anticipated. Having heard the request of aggrieved brethren, and their reasons, the Church voted, "1st, That the separate brethren did, by their withdraw, so long before they offered any reasons, give the Church just cause to be offended. 2d, That the Church had not received satisfaction." At an adjourned meeting it was farther voted,—“1st, That the separating brethren had no right to vote in the case then pending. 2d, That the reasons given by the brethren withdrawn from communion, were not sufficient to justify their separation, or for this Church to grant them a dismissal. 3d, That a Committee be appointed to prepare, in the name of the Church, an admonition to the brethren of the separation. 4th, That if the separate brethren shall slight the admonition, which shall be given them, to return to communion, this Church will, in due time, proceed to such further censure, as is directed in the Gospel.” The votes were

* The above intimation, unquestionably, contains the real reason why the truly manly and Christian confession of the aggrieved brethren was not received as an ample reparation of all past irregularities. The true head and front of their offending, was their determination not to return to the Church and parish. The acknowledgement was never made a matter of Church record. The legal disabilities under which that society afterwards suffered, requiring them to lay before the Legislature of the Commonwealth the original documents of their early transactions, was, in the providence of God, the only means of preserving it from oblivion. Many years afterwards, however, when the heat of party feeling had subsided, this very confession, retained in the memory only of certain of the members, was accepted by the Church as a sufficient ground on which to receive back into its fellowship one of those who had signed it, and was now disposed to return to his old relations.

passed by a very small majority, sixty-nine voting against sixty-five, the latter, however, including the aggrieved themselves. This took place on the 14th of February, 1744. Shortly afterwards, the Committee having prepared the admonition, the Church summoned the offending brethren to appear on a given Lord's day, at the close of divine service, to receive it. As might naturally have been expected from men who had conscientiously maintained separate worship more than two years, the accused were not found in attendance on the Lord's day, at the close of divine service in the third parish. And the Church not thinking it proper to proceed farther, at this time, left the whole matter, without any farther action, nearly two years.

Meanwhile, the disaffected in the other parish had not remained idle. Having been repulsed in their attempts at private conference with the pastor, with the declaration, that he would talk no more with them, they proceeded, according to his suggestion, to prepare a written statement of their grievances, among which, besides the points already mentioned, is the neglect to call *the complainants themselves to an account* for withdrawing from communion with the Church.* The letter, containing this statement, was read to the Church on the Lord's day, but no action was had on the subject. After waiting, between four or five weeks, the aggrieved addressed a second letter to the pastor, assuring him that the matters complained of were matters of great grief to themselves, and earnestly

* This written statement being prepared, and not yet presented, a copy of it was demanded by the pastor, that he might lay the charges contained in it before the Superior Court, then about to hold its session at York. Perhaps the intimation or threat here given, may serve to account, in part, for the backwardness sometimes manifested by the complainants to prepare written statements of their grievances.

entreating him seriously to consider them, and give the complainants reasonable satisfaction ; or otherwise to concur with them, in calling a council of the Churches, to hear their grievances, that so an end might be put to the unhappy controversy. This communication met the same fate with its predecessor. Again the aggrieved addressed the *brethren of the Church*, and entreated them to take the matter into serious consideration. The letter was read, as the others had been, on the Lord's day, together with the pastor's answer. But no vote was taken, no meeting for business appointed, and no copy of the answer sent to the aggrieved. Application for a copy of it was made, but the request was refused. The pastor also distinctly refused to call a meeting of the Church. Once more, an attempt was made to bring the brethren of the Church together, for a personal conference, but the attempt failed.

The aggrieved now resorted to a Council. It was convened on the eighth day of November, seventeen hundred and forty-three. On the third day of its session, the pastor, with the advice of some of the principal members of the Church, addressed a letter to the moderator, in reply to a communication from him, assuring him that it had been, and still was his intention, as soon as it might conveniently be done, to call the Church together, if the aggrieved desired it ; and that if the matter could not otherwise be settled, he was ready, with the Church, to join with the aggrieved, in calling a Council, mutually chosen, to hear and advise upon their difficulties. Aware of the evils attending all exparte decisions in ecclesiastical matters, the Council advised the aggrieved to accept the overture of their pastor, and if after suitable efforts they were unable to obtain satisfaction, then to unite with him in calling a mutual Council. And thereupon the first Council dispersed.

After waiting a few weeks, and perceiving no movement on the part of the pastor, the aggrieved again applied to him, requesting the fulfilment of his promise. Then they learned, to their surprise, that, of the mutual Council which had been promised them, they themselves were to choose not a single member; but the Church must choose the whole.* Not reckoning at a very high rate the *mutuality* of a Council so constituted, the brethren made several further attempts. The pastor, at one time, proposed to leave the whole matter to the Governor and Council. But this the brethren did not seem to think quite ecclesiastical. Again he offered to refer it to seven ministers. But this reference, they perhaps thought too exclusively clerical. Once more, he proposed a Council of Churches. But the pastor was to choose one third of the members, the Church one third, and the aggrieved the remainder. And as the majority of the Church was now well understood to be on the pastor's side, in the matter in controversy, the aggrieved regarded this plan likewise, as not likely to produce an impartial result.

Wearied and disgusted to find themselves so repeatedly balked, they now resorted a second time to an exparte Council. But again, perceiving some ground of encouragement to pursue further negotiations, they sent to stay the Council from assembling until further notice should be given. (a†) Failing in this, they once more sum-

* As far as I am able to judge of the facts by a comparison of counter statements, I am led to conclude that the method proposed here was this: that the pastor and the aggrieved were to *nominate*, each one half of the Council, but the Church would then be free to accept or reject the nominations. The objections to this method may be easily seen. The Church was understood to be a party with the pastor. If they were allowed to choose all the members of the Council, it would be an easy matter to exclude from it every one of those Churches and ministers, (for they were not numerous,) who were in full sympathy with the aggrieved in their views.

† The letters refer to the Appendix.

moned the Council. It consisted of eight Churches, and was convened on the twenty-fourth of July, seventeen hundred and forty-four. The Church and pastor resolved not to acknowledge nor notice it. The complainants made their own representations. The Council obtained a copy of the pastor's answer to the complaints alleged, which has already been alluded to, and determined to give it all due consideration. In the result, the complaints were sustained, the pastor censured, and the complainants advised, in case all proper efforts to obtain satisfaction should fail, "then to seek more wholesome food for their souls, and put themselves under the care of a shepherd, in whom they could with more reason confide."

The Church now proceeded, on their own part, to summon a Council. Having selected the members, they proposed, with great appearance of fairness, that the aggrieved should select an equal number to be joined with them, and make it a mutual Council. But in this number none of those Churches which had been before invited, could be chosen. And as these were nearly all the Churches in the neighborhood, in whom the aggrieved had confidence, they very prudently declined the proposal.

Another *ex parte* investigation was of course the consequence, and the result, as might have been expected, was exactly the reverse of the other.

One further hope now remained to the dissatisfied. The pastor being aged and infirm, measures were about to be taken for the settlement of another minister. But the candidate, whom the parish preferred, being no nearer to their own views, than his predecessor, they at length determined to avail themselves of the decision of their own Council, and formally withdraw from the Church.

Accordingly, on the twentieth day of December, seventeen hundred and and forty-five, about four weeks after the

ordination of the new pastor, they addressed a communication to the Church, recapitulating past transactions, and concluding as follows :

“ Wherefore, Brethren, on these considerations, for the peace of our consciences, our spiritual edification, and the honor and interest of religion, as we think, we do now withdraw communion from you, and shall look upon ourselves as no longer subjected to your watch and discipline, but shall, agreeable to the advice given us, speedily as we may, seek us a pastor who is likely to feed us with knowledge and understanding, and in whom we can with more reason confide.”

“ And now, brethren, that the God of all light and truth would lead both you and us into the knowledge of all truth, as it is in Jesus, is and shall be the desire and prayer of your Brethren,” &c. Signed by twenty-three male members of the Church.

I have been particular in detailing these transactions, because the separatists from both the two Churches have been charged with a disorderly separation. It will be seen, I think, from what has been presented, that whatever irregularity may have attended their earlier movements, sufficient evidence was presented, afterwards, of a disposition to atone for past errors, and obtain, if possible, a regular and orderly dismissal. Those belonging to the first Church had the decision of a Council in their favor,—an *exparte* Council it is true, but one which was not resorted to, till repeated efforts for a mutual one had been made in vain. Those from the third Church, perceiving that they had acted hastily in the first instance, made a frank and cordial acknowledgement. And though their urgent requests to be dismissed peaceably, in order to be formed into a new Church, had been continually neglected, they still delayed taking the final step, in hopes that, what

they looked upon as their most sacred rights, would yet be conceded by their brethren. That there was, by this time at least, a serious, settled and conscientious difference of opinion between the two parties, demanding separate worship, few I think, at this day, would be disposed to question. What the dissatisfied brethren, in the first Church, called "the glorious work of God," the pastor of that Church felt compelled to denounce as "a delusion of Satan." What the brethren in the third Church thought a "day of illumination," their pastor assured them he must still call "a day of temptation." In these circumstances, what was to be done? Had there been a regular mode of relief open to them, all must admit that they ought to have pursued it. But the important doctrine of religious freedom was, at that time, but poorly understood by the Congregational Churches in this region.

The members thus withdrawn from the first Church, now considered themselves at liberty to form other ecclesiastical connexions. Accordingly, on the third day of January, seventeen hundred and forty-six, nineteen of the twenty-three brethren who had signed the declaration of separation, were embodied into a Church, by affixing their names to the following mutual covenant:

"We, the subscribers, who were members of the first Church in Newbury, and have thought it our duty to withdraw therefrom, do also look upon it as our duty to enter into a Church estate, especially as we apprehend this may be for the glory of God, and the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom, and our own mutual edification and comfort. We do, therefore, as we trust, in the fear of God, mutually covenant and agree to walk together as a Church of Christ, according to the rules and order of the Gospel. In testimony whereof, we have hereunto set our hands this third day of January, Anno Domini, seventeen hundred and forty-six."

Such, my brethren, was the origin of this Church. Such the motives which led to its formation, and such the circumstances under which it was established. There had been, unquestionably, a glorious work of divine grace in the community. Along with it, there had been a large developement of the devices of Satan,—much disorder and enthusiasm,—much uncharitableness and wild fanaticism. But the chaff was now becoming separated from the wheat. The prevalence of sober and correct views, over false heat, was fast becoming apparent. The faults of the past had been acknowledged and renounced. Due efforts had been made to obtain an orderly release from former ecclesiastical relations. In the establishment of the new Church, the foundations were laid firm and deep in the essential principles of that faith and order which had been professed and practised by the earliest Churches of New England.

Meanwhile, the providence and grace of God was raising up, and preparing for the work to be assigned him, a pastor eminently qualified for the exigencies of the times, and the wants of this particular people.

The Rev. Jonathan Parsons was born in Springfield, Mass., Nov. 30, 1705. He was the child of Christian parents, and in his early years was carefully educated in the principles of faith and piety.

He entered Yale College at the age of twenty, and was ordained over a Congregational Church in Lyme, Conn., a little more than a year after he took his first degree. The first two years of his ministry he preached Arminian principles, and, as he afterwards had reason to fear, was a stranger to regenerating grace. But it pleased God to carry him through a severe mental conflict, by which his religious views were greatly changed, and his heart, as he ever afterwards believed, created anew in Christ Jesus.

Parsons was a minister at Lyme, during the whole of

that remarkable period, already designated as the "Great awakening." He was a close friend of Whitefield, and often entertained him at his house. Perhaps no man, if we except Whitefield, and Tennent, and Jonathan Edwards, was more completely identified with that wonderful movement, than he.

He had suffered severe trials in consequence. Five or six influential members of his own Church, violently opposed his ministry. Efforts were made to malign his character, and the opposition at length rose to such a height that he thought it his duty to retire from the sacred office, among that people, and seek for himself another place of usefulness.

It was just at this period, in the life of Parsons, that the new Church here was about to be organized. The advice of Whitefield turned the attention of the people towards him as a suitable person to become their pastor. Accordingly, a few days after they had embodied themselves into a Church, namely, on the seventh of January, seventeen hundred and forty-six, they invited him to take the oversight of them.

Vigorous efforts now began to be made to prevent the consummation of the contemplated connexion. The first Church passed a vote that it was disorderly to officiate as a minister on the Lord's day, to persons withdrawn from the neighboring Churches. (b) They also voted, in case he did not desist, they would send to Lyme and ascertain what misconduct he might be found to be chargeable with. A letter from one of his most violent opposers, in his former parish, was obtained and exhibited in various ways to his disadvantage. Even the mild and prudent Lowell went so far as to read, publicly from the pulpit, certain slanderous charges, which had chanced to come into his possession, with the express design of warning the people against him.

But the people were not so to be discouraged. They had listened to his defence and explanations. They had read the full and explicit recommendation given him by the Council which dismissed him from his former charge. (*c*) They believed him to be, as the event proved, eminently qualified for their peculiar exigencies. They therefore, still persisted in their determination to install him over them.

Accordingly, on the nineteenth of March, the installation took place. There was no Council called, for it was thought best, by the most judicious friends of the new Church, that it should remain, for the present, entirely independent. (*d*) The people assembled in the house of worship, and the pastor elect preached to them from 1 Peter 5: 9. "Steadfast in the faith." After singing a hymn, he reminded the congregation of the efforts, which had been made, since his call to become their pastor, to traduce his ministerial character; and having presented his testimonials for their consideration, proposed to them once more to decide whether it was still their wish that he should be their minister. The vote was taken by the clerk, and passed unanimously in the affirmative. (*e*) The pastor elect then said, "In the presence of God and these witnesses, I take this people to be my people," and the clerk replied, speaking in the name of the rest, "In the presence of God and these witnesses, we take this man to be our minister."

Meanwhile, they had agreed upon a platform of Church government and discipline, and adopted a confession of faith. The form of government was, at first, one which might properly be called independant Presbyterian. The difficulties which they had encountered in obtaining a release from the old Church, had made them greatly averse to Congregationalism. Their original platform, however,

was not intended to be permanent, but only to be observed for the present, until they could see their way clear to form other relations. It maintained, distinctly, that the power of privilege resides in the brotherhood at large, but, as the scripture has not explicitly bound them as to the mode in which it should be exercised, they are at liberty to do it through a representative body if they see fit. Such a body, therefore, it required the Church annually to appoint; and with them all the power of discipline was to be lodged, with this provision, that if the elders so appointed should be unable to reclaim an offender, they should at last bring the case before the brotherhood at large, to advise what should be done further in the case.

On the seventh of April following, the organization of the Church was completed by the choice of six ruling elders, and shortly after, negotiations were commenced which at length resulted in a connexion with the presbytery of Boston,—(*f*) the Church reserving one feature of her original constitution only, viz: the right to choose her elders annually,—a right which she has steadily maintained, through all changes, to the present day.

The Church had now become, in the full sense of the word, a Presbyterian Church. The motives which led to this were partly an aversion to the old system, for the reason just mentioned, and partly a necessity which was laid upon them to become another denomination, in order to escape the absolute oppression of the Congregational discipline, as then conducted. Strange as it may seem to some, who are in the habit of regarding Presbyterianism as too rigid, and unfriendly to popular rights, it was expressly for the purpose of avoiding undue rigidity, and in defence of popular rights, that the founders of this Church adopted that form of government.

The only exclusive principle, which this Church set up,

was that which respected Christian character and soundness in the faith. They often protested, that by becoming Presbyterians they had no intention to withdraw from free intercourse with their Congregational brethren. All Churches who adhered to the principles set forth in the Assembly's catechism, they stood ready at all times to welcome as brethren. (*g*)

The Church being thus organized and established, and provided with an able pastor, the brethren in the third Church, who were in sympathy with them, sought once more for a dismissal, in order to join them. This request was decisively denied, and the Church voted that they could not acknowledge the new Church as a regular Church of Christ.

The dissatisfied brethren now determined to retire without a dismissal; and, after long deliberation, and having taken the advice of such ministers as they thought worthy of confidence, the new Church voted to receive them. (*h*) Thus the scattered bands were at length united into one flock, and beneath the shelter of the sanctuary which then our hands had erected, they sat down together under the watch of the same spiritual shepherd. (*i*)

But the trials of this Church and congregation were but just begun. A long struggle ensued to obtain exemption from the exactions of the Congregational system, then by law established. Application was made to the Legislature to be released from taxation in the regular parishes. The parishes remonstrated, and the petition was denied. Again and again, was the subject brought before the General Court. Governor Shirley, in one instance, recommended the case to its special attention. But their neighbors insisted that they were a misguided band who ought not to be encouraged. They reminded the Legislature that they had

always been frowned upon by their predecessors in office, and that since being so treated, "they had sought shelter and relief under the Presbyterian form, but all in vain." They more than intimated the confident expectation, that they always would continue to be frowned upon. And so the case proved during many years. When the members of this congregation pleaded conscience against the exactions which were made upon them, they were told that what they called conscience, was but avarice. When they complained, that the burden was beyond their ability, they were taunted with the fact that they had assumed a voluntary burden, in the establishment of their own separate worship. When, in reliance on what seemed to them common justice, some of them refused to pay what was exacted, the officers of the law seized upon their persons and thrust them into prison. Repeated cases of this nature are to be found recorded in the private journal of the first pastor, in which, in the face of many indignities, he felt himself called upon to visit the prison to console his suffering brethren. The argument for these coercive measures was this, "the parish property is pledged for the support of the parish minister. The English dissenters are obliged to pay for the support of the established Church, and why should you be exempted?" True the law had already exempted Churchmen, Anabaptists, and Quakers. But the like privileges the poor Presbyterian must not look for. And why, forsooth? Because he ought not to *be* a Presbyterian. He should have never separated from the old Congregational parish. Strange as it may seem to us, with our present views of religious liberty, the third parish in Newbury earnestly remonstrated to the General Court, against granting the prayer of the petitioners, on the ground of the evil consequences likely to ensue "from the precedent of giving parish privileges to all the various sects in this province."

The oppression was so severely felt by this society, that they had taken the preliminary steps, at one time, to have their case particularly brought before the King in Council. They went so far as to obtain a written opinion of the Attorney General in England, respecting the best mode of procedure, and only desisted from their purpose because some judicious friends abroad thought such a representation as they would be obliged to make, might endanger the charter of the colony, and prove injurious to the interests of the English dissenters. About this time, however, some partial relief, but very inadequate, was granted them by the provincial Legislature.* It was not till many years after this, that an application from the town of Newburyport procured for all denominations here, the right to conduct their own ecclesiastical affairs in their own way.

Ample evidence exists that the members of this society, with their pastor, were, for many years, subjected among their neighbors, to many indignities. The strong feeling, with which Parsons mentions, in his diary, that the town clerk, though not a member of his society, treated him kindly when he called upon him, shows how little he was in the habit of expecting, in the way of respect and friendship. The low and vulgar, in some instances, reviled him, and pelted him with stones in the street.

The subsequent history of this Church and society I must pass over in the most cursory manner, for want of time. During the ministry of Mr. Parsons, a period of about thirty years, the Church and society flourished and increased greatly. It enjoyed several very cheering

* A comparison of dates shows that the partial relief above referred to, must have been wrung from the Legislature, under the fear that the case would otherwise be carried over to the government of the parent country. As it was, the relief was so stinted, and encumbered with so many conditions, that it proved rather the occasion of new lawsuits, than any very substantial benefit.

revivals of religion, during which many converts were added to the number of the professed followers of Christ. It was at one of these seasons, in the year 1756, that, the congregation having become too large for the place of meeting, the house where we now assemble was erected. (*j*) It was then supposed to be one of the largest in the country, yet so great was the increase of numbers that, about eleven years later, a plan was formed for erecting another house of worship, dividing the congregation into two parts, and inviting the Rev. James Sproat, afterwards of Philadelphia, to minister in one of them as colleague pastor with the Rev. Mr. Parsons. This plan, however, seems not to have been prosecuted. (*k*)

The communion seasons, during this period, were peculiarly animating and delightful. Parsons compares one of them to a similar season which he had enjoyed in Lyme, during his ministry there, and which, in his description of the work of grace given in the Christian history, he had called his Pentecost. He thought this even more delightful, in some respects, than that remarkable occasion. After the Church joined the Presbytery, the practice of the Scotch Churches was adopted, namely, that of having public religious exercises both the day before and the day succeeding the administration of the Lord's supper,—a practice which continued in the Church many years. So interesting were these seasons, that I have heard the aged people among us often say, that crowds flocked from the whole surrounding region to share in the pleasure and benefit of the exercises.

Mr. Parsons was a man eminently adapted to be at the head of such a people. A fervid revivalist of high repute, he was, of course, all they desired on that head. Experienced in the dangers which attend all religious excitements, he was prepared to furnish the most happy safe-guards.

Having once imbibed and preached the looser form of doctrine, then becoming prevalent in many of the Churches, he knew how to discriminate between truth and error, and raise the warning voice against the first beginnings of defection. The people, with some few exceptions, were, at that time, exceedingly ill-informed in respect to the Gospel system of religious truth, and Parsons' logical training and thorough scholarship, were eminently adapted to their instruction and establishment in the faith. It was a happy thing for this Church and society that it enjoyed, during so large a portion of its early trials and hazards, the services of such a man as Jonathan Parsons. (*l*)

During the ministry of Mr. Parsons, this Church and society enjoyed, in repeated instances, the services of the eloquent and devoted Whitefield, by whose counsels their early movements were in part directed, and were at length, in the providence of God, indulged the mournful privilege of laying his remains to rest beneath their own sanctuary, where they now slumber, awaiting the final resurrection, beside his, in whose hospitable dwelling, he so often, during his life-time, found a home.

The next minister was the Rev. John Murray. He was a native of Ireland, and received his education in the university of Edinburgh. When he came to this country, he was hardly twenty-one years of age, and shortly after was settled as a minister in the second Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia. But he had been guilty of a very serious misdemeanor in respect to the signatures to his credentials, which having at length come to light, was the cause of his removal from that city. He was next settled in Boothbay, where a presbytery, was formed, called "the presbytery of the eastward," of which he became the most prominent member. (*m*) Mr. Parsons had known something of Mr. Murray from his first

arrival, and when the unfavorable reports came to be circulated, he took special pains to inquire into their foundation. The result was a decided conviction, that the faults committed, taken in connexion with his own humble acknowledgment, were not such as justly to debar him from Christian charity, or to disqualify him for the exercise of the ministry. The presbytery of Boston, however, refused fellowship with Mr. Murray, and it was partly on this account, that this Church, with their pastor, withdrew from that presbytery, and became connected with the presbytery of the eastward.

Mr. Murray was a remarkable preacher. No man drew such crowds to hear him, or held them in a listening attitude so long. He was active in the promotion of religion out of the bounds of his own parish. Many ministers were educated by the aid which they received from a society of which he was the chief supporter and guiding spirit. Many Churches, especially in the state of Maine, owed their origin to his influence and exertions. He had his faults, unquestionably, which marred his usefulness; and the censure under which he remained, in the eyes of many, deprived the Church and society of that free intercourse which they might otherwise have enjoyed with some of the neighboring Churches; but his ministry seems to have proved, on the whole, a great blessing, both in the conversion of sinners, and the edification of the Church of Christ.

Mr. Murray was first invited to become colleague pastor with Mr. Parsons, several years before his decease; but declined the application, among other reasons, on account of the cloud under which his reputation was suffering. After the death of Mr. Parsons the application was renewed, but, for various reasons, he still persisted in his refusal. It was not till after long waiting and many discouragements,

that he was obtained to be the minister of this people. He was settled here, without any formal installation, on the strength of a vote of presbytery to that effect, June fourth, 1781, about five years after the death of Mr. Parsons; and continued in office, till his own decease, March 13, 1793, a period of about twelve years.

The third pastor was the Rev. Daniel Dana. Previous to his settlement, however, two successive divisions had fallen off from the Church and society.

During the latter days of Mr. Murray, a young missionary from Nova Scotia came to Newburyport, at the invitation of the pastor of the Church, to assist him in the administration of the Lord's supper. His talents were peculiar and striking. A large portion of the Congregation were delighted with him; and as Mr. Murray was now aged and infirm, desired to retain him as their minister. The majority, however, thought otherwise. The result was that the adherents of the young candidate withdrew, to attend upon his ministrations. After the death of Mr. Murray, they formally renounced the government of this Church, and, having erected a new house of worship, and having embodied themselves into an independent Church, took the Rev. Charles W. Milton to be their minister. The result was the establishment of a new religious society, which soon became one of the largest in the town, and which, whatever irregularity may have attended its origin, has won for itself an honorable place among the Churches of the Lord Jesus.

The second separation took place in connexion with the settlement of Mr. Dana. A portion of the Church and society, dissatisfied with the candidate who had been chosen, withdrew and formed the second Presbyterian Church in this town, and settled over them the Rev. John Boddily. Here, however, as in the former case, division

proved to be but reduplication. The new Church having settled down upon the principles of the same faith and order with ourselves, took the earliest opportunity, after a course of years, to secure for itself the services of the very same man, whom, in the first instance, it had rejected; and for many years it has held sweet intercourse, in holy things, both with the parent Church, and with its elder sister. We rejoice to welcome here, to-day, our brethren of both these societies, and to greet them as the descendants of the same sires, whose worth we have assembled to celebrate.

Mr. Dana was ordained November 19, 1794, and continued in the ministry in this Church, till he was called to take the Presidency of Dartmouth College, in the autumn of the year 1820. Few pastors have enjoyed, so universally, the warmest affection of their people, as Dr. Dana, during his ministry in this Church. The parting scene was truly affecting. They yielded him up only at the call of duty, and wept as children, when a venerated and beloved parent is taken from their head. (*n*) It was during the ministry of Dr. Dana, in the year 1802, that the Church, by a formal vote, adopted the constitution of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, in the United States, reserving only its established practice of electing its elders annually.

Several other important changes were effected, likewise, during this ministry. * The old practice of giving out the hymn, line by line, from the deacon's seat, was relinquished, for the more decent method of reading it connectedly, from the pulpit. The Church, also, laid aside the custom of a protracted series of services in connection with the administration of the Lord's supper, maintaining only a preparatory lecture on some week day, and a meeting for prayer on Saturday evening, before the communion. During this

ministry, the Church and society came into freer fellowship with the neighboring Churches, than had been enjoyed previously; the reasons of withholding such fellowship having now ceased to exist on both sides. (o) In the year 1811, the first chapel, for the accommodation of the Church and society in their less public religious exercises, was erected.

Dr. Dana's immediate successor was the Rev. Samuel Porter Williams. He was born in Weathersfield, Conn., February 22, 1779, entered Yale College in 1792, at the age of thirteen years, and was graduated in 1796. For a time he was engaged in mercantile employments, but, having at length given his heart to religion, he became a communicant, in March, 1803, and proceeded to prepare himself for the gospel ministry; first under the direction of Dr. Dwight, at New Haven, and then under that of Dr. Howard, of Springfield. He was first settled in Mansfield, Connecticut, where he remained several years. Two years, he labored, with much success, at Northampton. He was installed as pastor of this Church and society February 8, 1821, and died in the same office, Dec. 23, 1836.

Mr. Williams was a man of great energy, decision, and independence. What he thought, he said, and as his people always knew, it was said kindly, though it sometimes cut deep, they received it without taking offence. His preaching was eloquent, sometimes ornate, but instructive and adapted to impress the conscience and the heart. Some complained of his style as too involved and obscure; but he engaged the attention, awakened thought and enquiry, and was successful, it is believed, in turning many to righteousness. During the ministry of Mr. Williams, some ancient practices of the Church, good in their day, perhaps, but now grown obsolete, and to which some were disposed to adhere with almost superstitious veneration, were aban-

done. Among these, may be mentioned the practice of reading before the congregation a written account of the religious experience of candidates for admission to the Church.

The last public effort of Mr. Williams was on Thanksgiving day, less than one month before his decease. His pallid countenance, and scarce supported form, gave a powerful effect to his performance, as he announced his text from Isaiah 38: 18, 19, 20. "The grave cannot praise thee; Death cannot celebrate thee," &c., and proceeded to discourse to his people on "the value of life." "He seemed," says the editor of his discourses, "like one lifting up his head from the grave, to tell his people what it is that makes life precious in the estimation of a dying Christian."

Mr. Williams was succeeded in the sacred office by the Rev. John Proudfit, ordained October 4, 1827, and dismissed, on account of impaired health, February, 1833,—an accomplished scholar, a devout Christian, and a successful minister of the Gospel. The present incumbent was ordained September 16, 1835.

During the ministry of Dr. Proudfit, in the year 1829, the house of worship was repaired and altered, and a cenotaph erected in the eastern corner to the memory of Whitefield, by Hon. William Bartlett, then a member of this congregation. In the year 1831, this society, in common with others in this town, enjoyed a remarkable revival of religion. During most of that period the pastor was absent on a tour in Europe, and the pulpit was supplied chiefly by Rev. Joseph Abbot, now of Beverly, and Rev. Dr. Cheever, now of New York.

In the summer of 1843, the old chapel, having become decayed, a new and commodious one was erected in the rear of the Church and connected with it.

The cooperation between the Church and society has always been, it is believed, harmonious and pleasant. Seldom have serious difficulties occurred to disturb the general peace among the members of either. The regular ministrations of a settled pastor have been enjoyed, with but short intervals from the beginning. No minister has been dismissed from his office on account of dissension among the people, or a dissatisfaction with him or his labors. A good degree of spiritual prosperity has been enjoyed. (*p*) From its commencement to the present day, the Church has discovered a commendable interest, in all departments of Christian benevolence. From the earliest date at which its records were regularly kept, an annual collection was, for many years, taken up for the benefit of the poor among its own people, and a quarterly collection for general purposes of charity. In the year 1760, 340 pounds, 4 shillings and 3 pence, was collected "for the distressed people of Boston, who have suffered," say the records, "by the late fire there." Similar collections were from time to time afforded to meet other similar wants. To a society for promoting the the education of young men for the Gospel ministry, this congregation contributed liberally, as early as the year 1783. It was also active, at that early day, in maintaining missionaries in the destitute portions of our country, and particularly in that portion of the State which was then the District of Maine. Since the organization of the present system of benevolent associations, it has been a steady contributor to all the more prominent among them, furnishing annually an aggregate little short of the salary of its own pastor. It is believed few Churches and congregations,—especially if we consider the heavy burdens which the people were compelled to bear, for many years after their organization, in contributing to the support of two ministers,—their own

and that of the old parish,—have discovered, throughout their whole history, a more ready and diffusive liberality.

The Church still retains her early form of government and discipline. Amidst all the changes which have taken place around her, she has continued to be, and still is, a Presbyterian Church, the only one in the State, as I suppose, now connected with any presbytery. Twice at least, she has been solicited to adopt the forms of the surrounding Churches,—once by the Rev. Dr. Dana,* who, at the time of his settlement, had a preference for the Congregational form, and once by some of her own members. But in both instances she decided to remain, as her founders established her, Presbyterian. This Church has been connected, from time to time, with several presbyteries, and was, for many years previous to the great schism in the general assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, a constituent part of that body. Since that period, the presbytery of Newburyport, not being disposed to decide between the two bodies claiming the name and rights of that assembly, has remained separate.

This Church still maintains her original confession of faith. The Assembly's Catechism was at the beginning, ever has been, and still is, "for substance of doctrine," the exposition of her views of religious truth. Her six pastors have been men of various temperaments, and educated under a great variety of circumstances, but it is believed if they could all be gathered at this moment, they would see no occasion to disagree materially upon the points of doctrine, in which they have instructed their flock. Could the faithful dead, who have been its members, be assembled

* It is due to Dr. Dana to observe here, that whatever may have been the predilections of his youth, he has since, though by no means rigorous in respect to forms of government, evinced a strong and constant attachment to the presbyterian constitution and discipline.

now, the fathers among them would unquestionably find us changed in many important particulars ; in some respects, I trust, they would acknowledge that we have changed for the better ; but I trust they would not find us to have departed, in any material points, from an adherence to those precious truths, for the sake of which they consented to all their sacrifices. They would acknowledge and feel, that, so far as we are what we profess to be, we and they have “one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all.”

The history of this Church seems to impose upon us some peculiar obligations.

1. First it teaches us to be valiant for the truth, and to guard, with jealous watchfulness, the faith once delivered to the saints. The period, in which this Church was formed, was not the only period in which the purity and soundness of Christian doctrine has been endangered. There are perils encompassing the Church, at the present day, of which the fathers dreamed not. The enemies are more, and stronger, and more various and subtil, than at almost any period known to us since the Saviour's advent. At such a period, it becomes us to study carefully the principles and the foundations of our faith,—that we may hold fast to the sacred truths which our fathers cherished, not with a blind attachment, but with an intelligent and reasonable conviction. Beware, my brethren, of that looseness of thought and opinion, which regards all sorts of notions on religious subjects as equally good and equally safe to the soul. It is not so. Truth is one and invariable. Truth alone is able to make the heart of man wise unto salvation. Yet I would not have you fall into bigotry, in your attachment to, and defence of the truth. Between bigotry and an intelligent and conscientious adherence to

the true faith, there is the widest possible distinction. Contend earnestly for the faith, but do not quarrel about it. Keep ever an open hand, in fellowship with all those who hold the fundamental principles of the Gospel, however they may differ from you in less important particulars. And even towards those who seem to have departed from the right standard in essential matters, maintain ever that kindness, courtesy and friendly fairness, which will convince them that your firmness is not obstinacy, nor your opposition bitterness.

2. In the second place the history of this Church teaches us to strive earnestly for the promotion of living piety. It is not a round of decent formalities, it is not regular attendance on the outward means of grace, it is not external blamelessness of life, that constitutes true religion. The heart must be right with God. The interior fountain of moral feeling and action must be sanctified. The spirit of man must hold constant communion with the Divine Spirit. Our conversation must be in heaven, while we sojourn below, and our whole character wear the ornaments of heaven. A dead orthodoxy is hardly less to be deplored than the worst heresy. Religious truth has but a precarious hold upon us, when the intellect alone receives and embraces it. Unless we receive the truth in the love of it, it will be of no benefit to us. Let us strive then, both to feel and act, and to make others feel and act in accordance with the doctrines which we maintain. And praying earnestly for the influences of the Divine Spirit, without which no human efforts can avail anything, let us strive to convince the world of sin, lead the wandering soul back to the Saviour of sinners, and make the Church what its divine founder intended it should be, a living exemplification of the truth as it is in Jesus, a living epistle of recommendation to it, known and read of all men. O! if this Church

should ever sink down in a lifeless form, without the power of Godliness, methinks the ashes of the dead beneath and around us, would cry shame on us, from their tombs, for our wicked apostacy. Was it for this that they endured reproach, and trial, and suffering? That their posterity might forget the very thing which was most dear to them? No, my brethren, as you honor the fathers, live the religion you profess. Their contest was for a living piety.

3. The history of this Church teaches us to value and promote genuine revivals of religion. I know well that there is an element of imperfection,—a manifest token of inadequacy implied in that very word *revival* of religion. Some have been accustomed to regard the subject of religious influence too much in the light of a series of revivals. Hence they pray for revivals, they strive for the promotion of revivals, and they forget to pray and strive for that constant, steady and enduring power of Godliness, which shall be as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. But the imperfection and sinfulness of man, under the best circumstances hitherto, teaches us that there *will* be seasons of the decline of piety. In such seasons a *revival* is the object to be aimed at. Had it not been for those special effusions of the divine spirit, where, in all human probability, would the Churches of our country be at the present time? Dead, thrice dead and plucked up by the roots! In a revival of religion, there will always be discovered much imperfection, which would not be exhibited, under a constant prevalence of the life of Godliness. The dead man, beginning to recover his lost vitality, may be expected to discover traces of painful agony, hardly less than distort the features of the dying. But what then? Should we prefer, therefore, that the placid calmness of death should never be disturbed? So, in the case before us. The attendant evils are real evils, and should be

checked, and watched against, and prayed against, but after all, what is the chaff to the wheat?

4. The history of our Church teaches us to be active and energetic, and self-sacrificing, and, at the same time, to beware of false zeal, and disorderly practices in the promotion of the faith which we love. The former was, under God, the cause of the success of its founders; the latter was their grand hindrance, and the source of their greatest discouragements. An apostle bids us watch and be sober,—watch; never suffer ourselves to fall asleep at our post,—be sober; avoid all false heat and unbecoming transports. They that sleep, he says, sleep in the night, and they that be drunken are drunken in the night, but let us who are of the day be sober. Were we always *sober*, in times of peculiar religious interest, we should not be exposed, as we now too often are, to the sudden decay and desertion of the sacred influence.

We have received this Church and society, my brethren and friends, as a precious legacy from your worthy ancestors. Their sacrifices demand of us that we preserve, improve and transmit it. Our posterity too, have a claim upon us; for the rich estate was meant for them no less than for us. God grant that we may not prove ourselves unmindful of our trust.

5. Again, the history of this Church teaches you, (I almost dread to say it, when I consider the imperfection of my own services, but I must not refrain,) the history of this Church teaches you, never to be satisfied with an unfaithful ministry. Be candid, always, towards those who have the watch over you, in their difficult work, knowing that the best of them, no less than yourselves, are compassed with infirmities. But, O, let not even friendship, and human sympathy, make you shrink from withdrawing your support and confidence from such as do not preach Christ

Jesus, and him crucified, with zeal and fervor, and labor in season and out of season to win souls to Christ.

In closing this discourse I feel that I am sealing up, for the final account, one century of this Church's history. Another century will roll by, and who will celebrate its close? We shall, none of us, be here. Where, O where! will our immortal souls then be? Our children, too, will have passed off from the stage of life. But will the Church live? It will, if we are faithful as our fathers were. Other voices will be heard in its songs, and speak the message of the Most High from the sacred pulpit. Other hands will break the bread of life. But if the Church still lives; if, having prepared our own souls, by divine grace, and those of our immediate descendants, for the Church on high, and done our duty faithfully, we and they shall have been gathered into rest; with what joy shall we look down from the heavenly mansions, as the sainted dead now, we trust, look down upon us, and see our children's children, here preparing, through the grace of God, to join the same general assembly and Church of the first born. AMEN!

APPENDIX.

(1) The anniversary was observed on the day mentioned in the title page. This was selected with reference to convenience. The weather was exceedingly stormy, yet a numerous audience were in attendance. The introductory devotional exercises in the morning, were conducted by Rev. WILLIAM A. STEARNS, of Cambridgeport, a brother of the pastor. After the sermon, the following Hymn was sung, composed for the occasion by Hon. GEORGE LUNT, a member of the society :

Thy temple stands, oh God of grace,
Above our thought, beneath our tread,
Its ample floor, unmeasured space,
Its arch with worlds unnumbered spread.

Yet though not all creation's bound
Thy power contains, thy glory tells,
Within thy earthly courts are found
The places where thy spirit dwells.

Thus on our sires, an honored race,
Thy dews descended like the rain,
While *here* they met to seek thy face,
Nor sent a prayer to Heaven in vain.

Beneath these walls how oft they heard,
From fervent heart and burning tongue,
Thy sacred truth, thy holy word,
Sustain the old and cheer the young !

This earthly temple of thy praise,
How glorious and how dear its name !
Thy blessing crowned its ancient days,
Thy promised blessing stands the same.

Built on that Rock in Zion laid,
May here thy Church forever rise,
Thy truth its deep foundation made,
Its hope eternal in the skies.

No gorgeous rites, nor shrines of gold,
 Within these sacred precincts be ;
 But grant the fervent faith of old
 To bind us closer, Lord, to thee !

May here while ages roll away,
 Our children's children all appear,
 Here love to learn and praise and pray,
 And find their God, their Savior here !

The services of the afternoon were commenced by reading a letter to the Church from one of their former pastors, Rev. Dr. PROUDFIT, of New Brunswick, N. J. Then a portion of the preamble to the original Constitution of the Church, setting forth the views of the founders, was read. After a prayer for a divine blessing upon the solemn transaction, the Church rose and publicly renewed their covenant with God and one another, in the words originally adopted by their fathers, and to which the names of all the successive members have been signed. Prayer was then offered by the Rev. JOHN MARCH, of Belleville, Newbury, formerly a member of the Church. After this the sacrament of the Lord's supper was administered by Rev. JONATHAN GREENLEAF, of Brooklyn, N. Y., a descendant both of the first pastor, and also of one of the first members, and Rev. DANIEL DANA, D. D., who had been its pastor during twenty-six years. Appropriate hymns were sung in the intervals of the other parts of the service.

The exercises were solemn and impressive, and the Church, we trust, will be found to have received from them new strength to enter upon the unknown events of another century.

(a) The encouragement referred to was a new proposal to refer the whole matter to a mutual Council, first made on the part of the aggrieved, and accepted by the pastor ; then made in a somewhat modified form, by the pastor ; and, as the aggrieved allege, accepted by them. The Committee of the Church, in their statement, to the Council subsequently called, represented the aggrieved as having refused this offer. The aggrieved, on the other hand, denied the representation, and declared that they offered in form the following written declaration : " June 6, 1744. In answer to a proposal made us by our Reverend pastor, at the last meeting, we now offer to leave all difficulties between our pastor and us to a Council of Churches, mutually chosen by our pastor and us ; or to a Council of Churches, half to be chosen by our pastor and the Church who adhere to him, and half by us ; or to a Council to be chosen half by the aggrieved, and half by the rest of the Church. And if either of these proposals be accepted of or consented to, we desire the time for such Council's meeting may now be appointed, and the Churches sent to as soon as may be.

Instead of acting directly upon this very explicit offer, the Church passed the following vote :

“At a legal Church meeting it was voted unanimously in the affirmative, June 6th, 1744,—That whereas, several of our brethren in the first Church in Newbury have separated themselves from communion with said Church, it is desired that said separated brethren would give in their reasons to said Church why or for what reasons they have separated, at the next meeting; every separate member to give in his reasons in particular by himself.”

At the next meeting, June 13th, several of the brethren appeared and gave their reasons, but the Church dissolved the meeting without passing a vote. The proposal of the pastor, so explicitly accepted and renewed by the aggrieved, was not acted on, yet the aggrieved were still held chargeable with having rejected it.

It was on the ground of a supposed rejection of this proposal that the Council, subsequently called by the Church and pastor, declared the conduct of the aggrieved and that of the ex parte Council which had sanctioned their proceedings, irregular,—of course on the ground of facts which the aggrieved explicitly deny, and of which their own account is contained in the text. Of the result of the Church's Council the aggrieved say: “This Council justified the pastor further, we believe, than the Church expected, and no wonder, considering the foundation they proceeded on.”

(b) The following account is copied from the records of the First Church in Newbury:

“At the same day, (Feb. 11, 1745-6,) the Church taking into consideration the conduct of the Rev. Mr. Jonathan Parsons, of Lyme, in Connecticut, in preaching to a number of the brethren withdrawn from this and the neighboring Churches, voted as follows:

“1. That they are of opinion it is disorderly and matter of offence to them for any minister to officiate as a minister on the Lord's day among those people that have withdrawn from this Church and the Churches in the neighborhood.

“2. That it is their duty to signify to the Reverend Mr. Jonathan Parsons, that as a Church of the Lord Jesus Christ they are offended with him for his officiating on Lord's day to any of the brethren of this and the neighboring Churches.

“3. That if he does not refrain it is their duty to exhibit a complaint against him, as walking disorderly, to the particular Church that he stands related to.

“4. That inasmuch as the brethren withdrawn from us, and other Churches in the neighborhood, seem disposed to have a minister set over them, and may possibly effect it under their present circumstances, though it be greatly contrary to the rule and order of the Gospel, and inasmuch as they seem to affect the said Mr. Parsons, who by reason of misconduct, as we understand, has rendered himself unacceptable to the people he has had the charge of, that it is their duty to inquire into the matter of his offence, and what he has to recommend him to the esteem and acceptance of any people as a minister of the Gospel.”

(c) The course of proceedings at Lyme were exceedingly embarrassing and complicated. A pretty just view of the merits of the case may be obtained from manuscript documents preserved among the descendants of Mr. Parsons. One source of embarrassment in settling the difficulties, arose from the fact that Mr. Parsons, at the request of his people, as well as in conformity to his own judgment, explicitly renounced, at his ordination, the Saybrook platform, by which a large part of the neighboring Churches were governed. He thought that Constitution defective in several respects, but was especially averse to the right which it was understood to accord to the civil government of interfering in the affairs of the Church. The peculiarity of his position, however, gave rise to many misunderstandings.

The following testimony from two neighboring ministers, pastors of the two other parishes in the same place, who must have known thoroughly all the circumstances of the case, from the beginning, is sufficiently explicit and full. After recapitulating the result of the Council they proceed thus :

“ Now we, the subscribers, ministers of Lyme, above said, do heartily join in the recommendation above mentioned, and freely declare that we verily believe, and that upon much acquaintance with the whole affairs of the long subsisting difficulties that have been in that Church and society, that our dear brother, Mr. Parsons, has been injuriously treated, and much wronged in his character, by some, and that there is no just bar, that we know of, in the way of his usefulness, nor in the way of his administering as a minister of Christ among any people that shall call him thereto, as he hath always been gladly received by us and our Churches, as often as we have had the opportunity of his occasional labors among us.

GEORGE GRISWOLD,
GEORGE BECKWITH.

Lyme, October 24, 1745.”

(d) The following extract from Mr. Parsons' journal, will serve to throw light on the reasons of the position which this Church at first assumed :

Sept. 12, 1746. I spent most of the day with Mr. Jewett, of Rowley, and Mr. Daniel Rogers, of Ipswich. Had much discourse with them about the state of the Churches, and particularly about the state of this Church. I asked them what it was proper to do. Whether it was best to seek in a public way for the communion of the Churches by a Council, &c. Mr. Jewett replied, that he did not see any necessity for it, nor any advantage it would be to us on a temporal account, because, respecting being freed from rates, as long as the Court were of the same way of thinking as they be now, they will find means enough to deny any petition of this people, till they are forced to grant it; and then if we should call a Council and ministers should come, it would probably break their own Churches to pieces, and if they run such a risk and declared us a well established Church, it would give us the public communion of but few Churches. But if we were united to go forward as we were, a little while, we should find prejudices wear off. Mr. Rogers said he was of the same mind in the

main, but added that he thought it our bounden duty to continue as we were, independent of other Churches in Church discipline; for, said he, it is one principle that your Church went out upon, that they and many others were oppressed, and the discipline of the Churches so sunk, they could not have any further relief. Now, said he, there are many others that are oppressed, and stand in great need of relief, but are not likely to have it if you don't help them. But if you don't abide independent, in point of discipline, you can't relieve them; whereas if you continue as you are, you may soon have several Churches, round about, that may unite with yours in a consociation or presbytery, which will be much better than any other way.

(e) The following propositions were presented and severally acted upon :

Proposals respecting the Rev. Mr. Jonathan Parsons, offered to the new Church and Congregation in Newbury, at their meeting in the meeting-house, March 19, 1745, viz :

1. Whether the Church, notwithstanding all those representations, which have been spread abroad, tending to disserve Mr. Parson's character and hurt his usefulness, is in full charity with him, and from the judgment of the Council, now read, with the letters recommendatory, whether this Church is fully satisfied that his moral, religious and ministerial character is, or ought in justice to be esteemed, blameless and unsullied among the Churches of Christ. Voted in the affirmative.

2. Whether the Congregation that usually meets in this house to attend and uphold the worship of God here, are well satisfied from the judgment of Council, and letters recommendatory now read, that Mr. Parsons' moral character ought to be esteemed blameless and good, and whether they so account of him, as of a minister of Christ. Voted in the affirmative.

3. Whether the congregation that usually meets in this house, to attend and encourage the worship of God here, do desire Mr. Parsons to settle among them, and minister in holy things, as a minister of Christ to them, and whether they will, upon condition of his accepting the call of the Church and Congregation, submit themselves to his administrations in this place—the same being agreeable to the faith and constitution upon which this Church is settled. Voted in the affirmative.

4. Whether this Church is willing, from the acquaintance they have with Mr. Parsons, and the letters from the ministers and churches now read to them, to admit him to their communion, in all the special ordinances of the Gospel, to esteem him as one of the members of the body of Christ in a particular relation to this Church, as one in good standing, having an equal right, in all respects, to all privileges with any other member of the Church. Voted in the affirmative.

5. Whether this Church looks upon Mr. Parsons, already authorized by solemn separation to the work of the Gospel ministry, to do the whole work of a Gospel minister in any particular Church of Christ that desires the same of him, and are willing to put themselves under his pastoral care. Voted in the affirmative.

6. Whether this Church do now publicly renew their call to Mr. Parsons, desiring him to take the oversight of this part of Christ's flock in particular. Voted in the affirmative.

7. Whether upon consideration that Mr. Parsons does publicly accept of their call, this Church do submit to him under Christ, as their pastor,

vested with a Gospel right over this Church to read, expound, and teach the word, to administer the seals of the new covenant to them, and the ordinance of holy discipline, according to the constitution of this Church. Voted in the affirmative.

(f) The Church early entertained the design of uniting itself with a regular presbytery. On the fifth of April, 1746, a resolution was adopted to that effect; but for reasons not stated, the subject was at a subsequent meeting, postponed. In the month of September, 1748, the Church voted unanimously to unite with the Presbytery of Boston, of which Mr. Moorhead, of Boston, and Mr. McGregoire, were prominent members. The record of this vote is as follows:

"Sept. 15, 1748. At a meeting of the collective body of the Church, after sermon and prayers, it was debated whether all were freely willing to be annexed to Mr. Moorhead's presbytery, and after discoursing, in love and calmness upon it, for more than an hour, a question was proposed and deliberately read over, three times, in the following words, viz: Whether upon mature deliberation this Church does consent to be annexed to Mr. Moorhead's presbytery, in case said presbytery can satisfy the elders of the Church respecting their coming off from the presbytery to which they formerly belonged, appear really desirous of receiving us, make no difficulty about our choosing our elders annually, don't bind any respecting the form of administering and receiving the sacraments, appear to be hearty friends to the great doctrines of Grace as contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms, and hearty friends to the power of Godliness."

The vote passed unanimously, and the next spring we find the elders of the Church appointing one of their number as a representative to the presbytery above named.

(g) In a petition to the general Court, dated October 29, 1748, they say as follows:

"Amongst other things it is alleged that the petitioners are of the Presbyterian persuasion. Your humble petitioners beg leave to suggest that they never intended because they were Presbyterians, which respects the form of Church government only, (according to the general understanding of the words,) that therefore they could not attend the worship of God in a Congregational Church; but their difficulties are of a higher nature and concern doctrinal points, which bind their consciences, otherwise, upon this first point, they had never troubled your excellencies and honors."

In the preface to their platform of Government, the fathers of the Church declare, "We shall readily join with those Churches that explicitly declare they have not departed from the ancient faith."

In the year 1794,

"The Church voted unanimously that we still adhere to the Constitution of this Church, and our connexion with the presbytery, and desire further to hold ministerial and Church communion with such other ministers and Churches as are united with us in the great fundamental

doctrines of the Gospel, in the same manner as heretofore practised by this Church."

In conformity with these principles, this Church has been accustomed to invite her sister Churches of the congregational denomination, to set in Council with the Presbytery, in the ordination of her ministers, and to reciprocate the same friendly aid in answer to invitations from them. She dismisses and recommends her members freely to all such of these Churches as are sound in the faith, and as freely receives members from them on their recommendation.

The old form of recommending a member was as follows :

"Voted to recommend ——— to the communion of the Church of Christ in sealing ordinances in any Christian assembly where God, in his providence, may call him, provided they adhere to the doctrines of the reformation, renouncing Arminianism on the one hand, and Antinounianism on the other."

(h) The application from the brethren from the third Church, was first presented June 9, 1746.

"The brethren chose to think of the affair a little while, and take more opportunity to ask advice of ministers. Therefore, it was desired that Elders John Brown and Benjamin Knight should go to Bradford, where a Council was to set the next week, and advise with some of the ministers about the matter. I hope the Lord will direct us in the right way, and make us all of one mind."—*Parsons' Journal*.

The request was not granted till the 16th of October following.

(i) The names of most of the men who were concerned in the first establishment of this religious society, may be ascertained, I presume, from the following subscription paper, copied, without the sums annexed, from the original, by John Brown, the first clerk :

"Upon the mature consideration of the many Difficultys we have long laboured under on Religious accounts, we look upon it, for many and weighty Reasons, our Duty, & not only so, but that it would be much for our Spiritual advantage & edification, and for the advancement of the Interest of the Redeemer's Kingdom among us to unite in a New Society for the Settlement of a Gospel Ministry among us, and it having pleased God in his Providence to give us an opportunity of Hearing the Rev. Mr. Jonathan Parsons whereby we have had some tastes of his Ministerial abilities and Qualifications, from which we can't but think if it should please God to incline him to settle among us in the Ministry, we have a prospect opened to us of obtaining these blessed Ends, looking upon it also our Duty to provide an handsome suitable Support for such a Ministry : Upon the Rev. Mr. Parsons accepting our Invitation, We the Subscribers do hereby for ourselves covenant engage & agree to pay for the Support of the said Rev'd Mr. Parsons yearly & every year while he continues in the Ministry among us : the several Sums which we have herein subscribed for, We also covenant and agree to pay towards his

Settlement the several Sums which we have subscribed for, as they are set in the following Lists which are both in the Old Tenor as witness our hands affixed thereto—

Newbury, Nov'r 25th, 1745.

Thomas Pike,	Benj. Norton,	Samuel Hale,
Timothy Toppan,	Samuel Cresey,	Moses Noyes,
Moses Bradstreet,	Jonathan Greenleaf,	Daniel Gooden,
Enoch Sawyer,	Nehemiah Wheeler,	Nathan Peabody,
Enoch Titcomb,	William Harris,	John Lowden,
Charles Peirce,	Benj. Peirce,	Ralph Cross,
Daniel Noyes,	Simon Noyes,	John Norton,
Richard Toppan,	Samuel Toppan,	John Harris,
John Brown,	Samuel Long,	Joshua Combes,
William Brown,	Moses Coffin,	Joshua Greenleaf, Jr.,
Nathaniel Atkinson,	Jonathan Plumer,	Nathan Brown,
Joseph Atkinson,	John Plumer, Jr.,	Lemuel Jenkins,
Edward Presbury,	Samuel Harris,	Nicholas Pettingle,
Enoch Toppan,	Silvanus Plumer,	Daniel Woster,
Joseph Hidden,	John Poor,	Joseph Couch Jr.,
Ebenezer Little,	Henry Titcomb,	Daniel Lunt, Jr.,
Jonathan Beck,	John Berry,	John Harbut,
Benjamin Rogers,	Philip Combes,	Samuel Shackford,
Spencer Bennett,	Jacob Knight,	Alexander Morrison,
Benj. Moody,	Moses Peirce,	Henry Sewall,
Stephen Kent,	Nathaniel Knap,	Edmund Morse,
Parker Noyes,	Moses Todd,	Daniel Richards,
Enoch Titcomb, Jr.,	Eleazear Keazear,	Daniel Wells,
Joshua Greenleaf,	John Fisher,	Samuel Todd,
John Greenleaf,	Zechariah Nowell,	Moses Ordway,
Timothy Greenleaf,	Joseph Bayley,	Daniel Sanborn,
Robert Mitchel,	Joseph Cheney,	Benj. Peirce, Jr.,
Benj. Frothingham,	James Safford,	Joseph Russell,
George Goodhue,	Cutting Pettingle, Jr.,	James Mackmillion,
Joseph Goodhue,	Henry Lunt, Jr.,	Samuel Peirce,
Isaac Johnson,	Cutting Pettingle,	Benj. Knight,
Jonathan Knight,	Samuel Pettingle,	Bez'd Knight,
William Noyes,	Moses Pettingle,	Robert Cole,
Daniel Harris,	Richard Hale,	John Pike, Jr.

A true Copy from the Original. Taken this 16th of Dec'r, 1745.

As Attest.

JOHN BROWN, *Clerk.*

(j) In an almanac journal, kept by Mr. Caleb Greenleaf, are to be found the following entries :

1756. "July 5, we began to raise our meeting-house and finished it the 7th, and not one oath heard and nobody hurt." "On the 7th, the Rev. John Morehead, of Boston, preached the first sermon in it from 2d Chronicles, 7 : 12. The first sermon preached in our new meeting-house was on Aug. 15. The text was the whole of 122d Psalm." 1759. "Sept 10, Mr. Samuel Pettingell fell from the steeple of Mr. Parsons' meeting-house, which was this year erected, and was killed instantly."—*Coffin's History.*

(k) The following letter from Mr. Parsons to Mr. Sproat, contains the only account I have seen of this design :

“REV. AND DEAR BROTHER :

An late exchange has had a wonderful influence among many of our people, which has produced the following proposals, for the trial of the minds of the congregation, viz : ‘Proposals for calling and settling the Rev. Mr. James Sproat as colleague pastor with the Rev. Mr. Parsons, of Newburyport. Conditions.—That the building in Newbury first parish be finished with as many pews in proportion to its bigness, as are in Mr. Parsons’ meeting-house. The finishing to be by the sale of the pews under the conduct of that part of the congregation living in said parish. 2d, that the taxation of pews, polls and estates in said new building, or belonging to it, shall bear the same proportion with that in the other house. 3d, that said Messrs. Parsons and Sproat be esteemed as ministers equally belonging to both houses, they agreeing as to times of preaching in the one and the other. 4th, that the whole body be one particular Church, governed as Mr. Parsons’ has been heretofore, and that the proportionable part of the elders be always among those that belonged to said first parish, being chosen by the whole body. 5th, that those who do or may belong to either of said houses, do submit themselves to a taxation, as mentioned above, for an equal support of both the ministers. Dated Newburyport, October 26, 1767. The subscribers hereby declare their approbation of the proposal of such settlement, and of the condition above mentioned, and desire the affair may be prosecuted.’

‘The above is now prosecuting, and it is desired you would not engage with any other people for four weeks from the date of this letter. After all I can’t advise anything in my difficult situation, but can assure you no man would be more agreeable as colleague than you.’

From a comparison of dates, I am led to suppose that the new house referred to in this letter, was the one described by Coffin in his history, as having been raised and boarded July, 1766, opposite the old meeting-house in the first parish in Newbury, and which was never finished, but fell to the ground in a violent storm, February, 1771. Many of the movers in that project were, it seems, members of Mr. Parsons’ society, held to the support of a ministry in the First Parish, which they conscientiously disapproved. Mr. Parsons’ Journal shows that much disorder prevailed in the religious affairs of the two towns about this period.

(l) The character of Mr. Parsons had some marked faults as well as marked excellencies. Tradition says he was at times exceedingly passionate, but that when the first impulse was over, no man could be more penitent. An anecdote like this has been related of him. On one occasion a bill was presented him for payment, which at first struck him as exorbitant, and he very angrily and peremptorily refused. No sooner, however, had the claimant returned to his place of business than Mr. Parsons entered, and the following dialogue ensued : “Have you seen Mr. Parsons this morning ?” “Yes, certainly, I saw you at your house, and presented your bill.” “It wasn’t Mr. Parsons, it was the devil. I’ll settle the bill.” It is presumed that by

thus charging his excited feelings to Satanic agency, Mr. Parsons did not intend to excuse but rather to humble himself.

(m) The following extracts from Greenleaf's "Sketches of Ecclesiastical History," will serve to throw some light upon the early Presbyterial relations of this Church.

"The first Presbytery in New England, was constituted in Londonderry, April 16, 1745, by Rev. John Morehead of Boston, Rev. David M'Gregor of Londonderry, and Rev. Robert Abercrombie of Pelham, with James M'Kean, Alexander Conkey and James Heughs, elders. It was called the 'Boston Presbytery.'" In three years, they were joined by Rev. Jonathan Parsons of Newburyport, and after that, by one or two others, and so continued for nearly ten years. There were a considerable number of Presbyterian Churches, lying on both sides of the Merrimack, in Massachusetts and New Hampshire, and a few in Maine. The presbyterial records appear to have been regularly kept till 1751. A chasm then appears, and nothing is recorded in the original book until Oct. 24, 1770. The Presbytery at this time consisted of twelve congregations. Measures were taken for dividing it into three, and forming a Synod. After more than four years, during which some others were added to the number, at a meeting at Seabrook, May 31, 1775, a division was amicably agreed on as follows: that Messrs. Jonathan Parsons of Newburyport, Nathaniel Whitaker, D. D. of Salem, Samuel Perley of Seabrook, Alexander M'Lean of Bristol, Maine, and the congregation at Boston, then vacant by the death of Mr. Morehead, together with Rev. Benjamin Balch, and the vacancies within their bounds be the 'Eastern Presbytery,' called the 'Presbytery of Salem.' That Messrs. David M'Gregor of Londonderry, Daniel Mitchell of Pembroke, Simon Williams of Windham, and John Strickland of Oakham, with the congregation at Petersburg, and the other vacancies within their bounds be the middle presbytery, called the Presbytery of Londonderry. That Messrs. John Houston and Moses Baldwin, with their congregations at Bedford and Kingston, the vacant congregations of Blandford, Pelham and Colrain, with Aaron Hutchinson, Nathan Merrill, George Gilmore, and Joseph Patrick, candidates, be the western presbytery, called the Presbytery of Palmer. The three presbyteries being thus organized were then formed into one body called the Synod of New England, and held their first meeting at Londonderry, September 4, 1776.

A few years previous to this, the Rev. John Murray had removed from Philadelphia and settled at Boothbay, and with Rev. Mr. Prince of Barrington, and Rev. Mr. M'Ewins of New Market, formed another Presbytery, but no connexion was ever formed between this body and the Synod of New-England."

The Presbytery last referred to, was called the Presbytery of the Eastward, and with this Mr. Parsons and his Church, having withdrawn from their connection with the former body, now became united.

(n) At the close of the first half century from his settlement, Rev. Dr. Dana, being then pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church in this town, delivered, in compliance with a special request, a very excellent and appro-

prate discourse, the following correspondence having previously passed between him and the pastor and session of his former charge :

NEWBURYPORT, NOV. 23, 1844.

THE REV. DANIEL DANA, D. D.

Dear Sir,—With the full concurrence, as we believe, of the First Presbyterian Church and Society, to whose service in the gospel, the energies of your youth were devoted, we present you our sincere thanks for the very appropriate and excellent discourse delivered at our place of worship, on the semi-centennial anniversary of your ordination.—Believing that its usefulness may be still further extended, we would also respectfully request a copy for publication.

J. F. STEARNS, Pastor of the Church.
 THOMAS M. CLARK, } Committee of the Session.
 PAUL SIMPSON, }

To the Reverend Pastor, and the Session of the First Presbyterian Church.

MY DEAR BRETHREN,—As your cordial invitation, to preach a semi-centennial sermon in your house of worship, left me no choice, so your present request, though dictated, probably, by a too partial judgment, is equally decisive with me. I therefore submit the discourse, with all its imperfections, to your disposal.

Whether it shall, or shall not be found worthy of the public attention, it will at least signify to the beloved people of my *former* and my *present* charge, what were the first, the last, and the dearest wishes of their affectionate pastor, in their behalf.

Believe me, my dear brethren, very sincerely yours,

DANIEL DANA.

NEWBURYPORT, NOV. 25, 1844.

In the evening of the same day there was a delightful gathering, at the house of Dr. Dana, of friends from all religious societies and denominations among us, who thronged thither to pay him their respects and congratulations. Few, it is believed, went empty handed, and among the sons of Newburyport in other places, some who could not be present, claimed the privilege of sending their free will offering.

(o) The settlement of all difficulties previously existing between this Church and the First Church in Newbury is due chiefly to the efforts of the present pastor of that Church the Rev. Leonard Withington. Unwilling to take the charge of a people with whom any of the neighboring Churches were not in full charity, he insisted before calling the Council for his ordination, that an effort should be made to secure amicable relations between the two Churches. Accordingly committees were appointed on both sides, and after mutual conference and investigation the following transactions took place.

By The First Presbyterian Church in Newburyport,

“Voted, that from a careful examination of the records, it does not appear that this Church has at any time, recent or remote, affixed any ecclesias-

tical censure to the First Church in Newbury, or to any individuals belonging to it."

Thereupon the First Church in Newbury,

"At a meeting of the Church, October 16, 1816, Voted, That all misunderstandings and infelicities whatever, which may have existed between this Church and the First Presbyterian Church in Newburyport, be from this time buried in perpetual oblivion, and we on our part cheerfully agree and engage that the two Churches shall mutually treat and be treated by each other as Christian Churches, agreeably to the principles of the gospel and the established usages of the Churches of New England."

On the same day the First Presbyterian Church in Newburyport passed the same vote unanimously in the same words, and communicated the fact to the First Church in Newbury by their committee as follows :

"NEWBURYPORT, OCT. 17, 1816.

DEAR SIR,—It is with much pleasure that I can inform you that I am entrusted by the First Presbyterian Church in this place to give you notice that said Church unanimously adopted the vote recommended to them by their committee relative to an amicable understanding with your Church, which I hope will be of long continuance and for the glory of God in the building up of his kingdom.

With sentiments of esteem and affection,

I am, dear Sir, your brother,

THOMAS M. CLARK.

HON. EBEN MARCH, &c."

Since the adoption of this mutual agreement, no Churches have been more happy and undisturbed in their fellowship than this once rebellious daughter and offended parent.

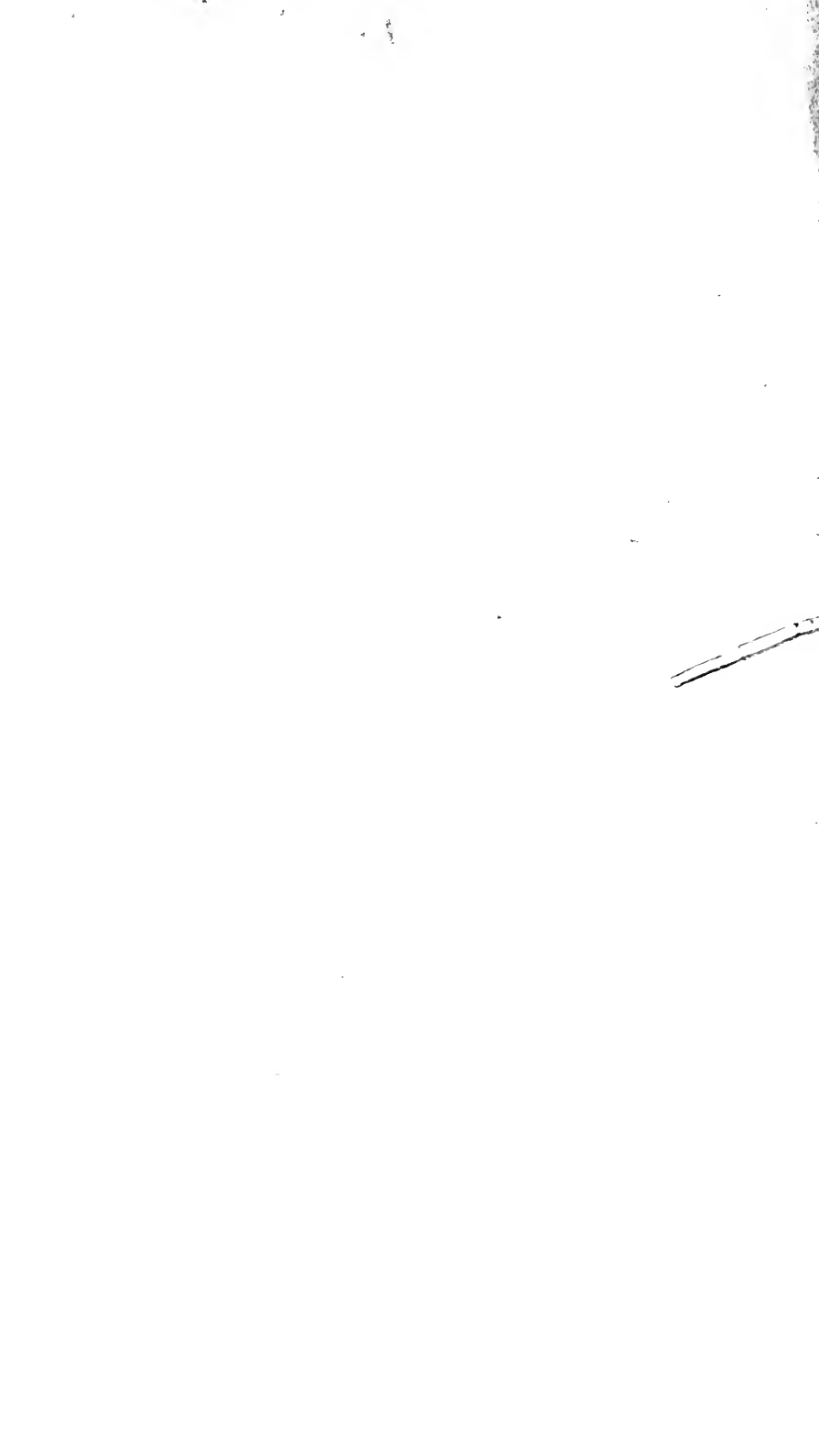
(p) The number of names signed to the covenant at its first adoption, was 46, viz: 24 males and 22 females. The following statistical table will show the whole number who have been admitted during the ministry of each of the several pastors, with the annual average during each, omitting fractions.

<i>Ministers.</i>	<i>No Yrs.</i>	<i>Whole No.</i>	<i>Ann. Av.</i>
Parsons,	30	303	10
Murray,	12	88	7
Dana,	26	298	8
Williams,	6	89	15
Proudfit,	5 1-2	218	39
Present Pastor,	10	164	16

The whole number, as far as can be ascertained, during the century, is 1160.



WITHINGTON'S
E R M O N,
FOR THE
100 HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE STANDING OF THE
First Church in Newbury,
ON ITS PRESENT SITE.



A

S E R M O N

FOR THE

TWO HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY

OF THE STANDING OF THE

First Church in Newbury,

ON ITS PRESENT SITE.

OCTOBER 20, 1846.

BY REV. LEONARD WITHINGTON,

PASTOR OF SAID CHURCH.

RENDER THEREFORE TO ALL THEIR DUES.—St. Paul.

NEWBURYPORT:

ENOCH HALE, JR., PRINTER, COURIER PRESS.

.....

1846.

At a meeting of the members of the First Parish in Newbury, held this day, *Voted*, that the *thanks* of this Society be presented to the Rev. Mr. WITHINGTON, for his interesting and instructive Sermon delivered this day. *Voted*, that Messrs. D. Colman, R. Coffin, and R. Tenney, be a Committee to request a copy for the press.

Newbury, Oct. 20, 1846.

WILLIAM THURSTON, Clerk.

REV. LEONARD WITHINGTON:

Dear Sir,—Agreeable to a vote of the members of your Society, the undersigned do present you their thanks for your Sermon (delivered on the 20th of October, 1846) and do respectfully request a copy for the press.

DANIEL COLMAN, }
RICHARD COFFIN, } Committee.
RICHARD TENNEY, }

Newbury, Oct. 27, 1846.

To the Gentlemen of the Committee of the First Parish in Newbury:

I regret that some of the subjects touched on in this discourse demand a volume rather than a few lines; particularly the history of toleration and its rise in Holland. No justice can be done the subject, or me, without remembering, I have merely hinted a fact which long research might prove. But I commit the discourse to your disposal, merely reminding the candid reader that, in such sermons, brevity is hardly ever regarded as an imperfection.

With great respect

I subscribe myself

Your Friend and Pastor,

LEONARD WITHINGTON.

To Messrs.—

DANIEL COLMAN, }
RICHARD COFFIN, } Committee.
RICHARD TENNEY, }

Oct. 30th, 1846.

SERMON.

PSALM XCIX, S. 9.

THOU ANSWEREDST THEM O LORD, OUR GOD: THOU WAST A GOD THAT FORGAVEST THEM, THOUGH THOU TOOKEST VENGEANCE OF THEIR INVENTIONS. EXALT THE LORD OUR GOD, AND WORSHIP AT HIS HOLY HILL; FOR THE LORD OUR GOD IS HOLY.

The veneration with which we look back on our ancestors, as well as the affection which attaches us to a particular region of country, is a strong feeling, implanted in our hearts by Providence, and there are occasions when it needs to be regulated rather than increased. Pride, if it be ever lawful, becomes honest when we look back on ancestors to whom, under God, we owe half our virtue and nearly all our happiness. We hear of Solon; we give him the purest praise. And our fathers were men, who laid the foundation of an empire; they combined religion with government; piety with learning; and opened the fountain, whose ever flowing waters are to become a river, nourishing the trees, whose fruit and branches are to give pleasure and aliment to all who behold their beauty, or sit under their shade.

The praises, however, bestowed on the Puritans have not always been discriminating. They are our fathers; and we have been sometimes led into the amiable error of over-rating their virtues and turning our eyes away from their faults. If our partiality terminated in speculative admiration, it might be forgotten and pardoned. But

we are strongly tempted to imitate what we admire ; we are tempted also to compensate the neglect of some virtues, by the cheaper duty of praising them in our ancestors ; just as the scribes and pharisees, BUILT THE TOMBS OF THE PROPHETS AND GARNISHED THE SEPULCHRES OF THE RIGHTEOUS. Men are sometimes led blindly to adore in the past those very virtues which they are most lacking in, in their own example. At any rate, the best praise is that which is found the more just, the more it is examined, and will last as long as truth itself. Our text is applicable to our fathers. No doubt God led them to this wilderness ; he employed them in a very important work—he took them away from the feudalism of the old world ; he sent them, out, as he sent Abram to Canaan, to this distant continent ; he employed them in building up a new system of government and religion ; he laid his ordaining hands on them for that work ; he gave them all the virtues which he saw necessary, and he allowed some of the errors which his own deep wisdom sometimes condescends to use in bringing about its mighty purposes. In a word, our text was true of them as it was of a remarkable people of old. THOU WAST A GOD THAT FORGAVEST THEM ; THOUGH THOU TOOKEST VENGEANCE OF THEIR INVENTIONS ; that is, they had not faults which merciful justice did not forgive, and they had inventions which time and experience must sweep away.

New England owes its existence to the faults of the reformation. When we read the history of that remarkable event our sympathy is enlisted with the reformers ; we admire their fortitude ; their zeal ; their sincerity ; their scorn of tyrants and their reverence for God. Our feelings inform us where they ought to have stopped ; and we regret deeply when we see the beauty and the progress of the work marred by the dissensions of good men. O, if Queen Elizabeth had had a little more earnest piety ; if her bishops had been a little more conciliating and their measures more mild ; if the puritans themselves had been

less zealous about the surplice, and a little more men of the world,—what a beautiful edifice of unity and wisdom might have sprung up. How would the mouths of gainsayers have been stopped ; and how powerful would have been the action of protestantism on the heart of all its foes! A corrupt church might have been overthrown; and the stream of pious influence, united in one channel and flowing in one direction, might have sweetened the whole ocean and pervaded the whole earth. What a divine unity; what a blessed effect! Such are our theoretic dreams. But God's ways are not our ways. It is his will that the Church should be torn by dissension and his people thrive by persecution. He loves a little flock; and the splendid chandeliers that man's invention devises to light his temple, are shivered by the tempest which his justice raises, whenever we open the doors. It was these contests of the protestants that planted New England. They came to settle on these shores under angry skies; they crossed an angry ocean; they brought with them the seeds of an angry religion; and, though they were favored with the mercy, yet they sometimes met the frowns of an angry God.

Thus was New England cradled in religious dissension; she was born in a vortex, or to speak more fully she owed her origin to that deep religious feeling which is far more favorable to energy than to peace. We must take our blessings in that exact combination which Providence presents them to us. We hook up the fish from the stormy ocean; the nuts, which grow upon the tall trees, are shaken down to us by the violent wind; and even the rose itself blooms on the thorn. It was not to be expected that the soft civilities which spring up in still life were to be found among ardent spirits, whose only recreation was prayer and meditation; and whose self-denial was willing to cross an ocean to found an empire. At any rate, New England from her very commencement was shaken by

religious disunion. The everlasting question of uniting, the rights of conscience with the unity and welfare of the Church ; the antinomian tendencies of a high orthodoxy ; the over-action of individual zeal, the excesses of that THEOPATHY which is separated from the principle of obedience ; the individuality which will burst out when men are free ; the delicate line between the departments of municipal law and private morality ; all these questions—perhaps some of them not even yet solved, agitated the public mind to its very centre. They came to this shore to enjoy peace ; but reformation is a series of questions which seem to exist in an everlasting chain. How can you have peace when every impetuous Jehu, yokes his chariot and whips his horses, and says to every wise man that meets him ; WHAT HAST THOU TO DO WITH PEACE? TURN THEE BEHIND ME.

This ancient parish may be considered as the very concentration of the character of New England. Here was found, as in a miniature, with lines not the less strong for their littleness, all its virtues and all its faults. The first parish of Newbury gives abundant proofs, in its written records, that it preferred strenuous liberty to peaceful bondage ; that it could attend on the ordinances and hearken to the counsels of a minister, and yet resist him ; pay him his salary very punctually ; take off the hat whenever it met him, with the most conventional reverence, and yet draw the line where they supposed justice and encroachment met ; and defend their purposes with the most pious obstinacy. It is a remarkable fact, even in the days of Parker, that a contention was carried on for twenty-five years with both the clergymen, for the rights of the Church, which many of the people thought invaded. Various decisions of the court were had on the subject ; several against the popular side of the question ; until finally the people carried their point ; all the while maintaining order and attending on the preaching. * Such

* See a very curious account of this controversy, in Mr. Coffin's very ample, very impartial and very interesting history of Newbury, page 72 and onward.

is New Englandism ; such is liberty as developed in this part of the world ; a sober principle ; revering God, but scorning the aggressions of man ; definite in its aim ; rather obstinate in its purposes ; willing to be LED but impossible to be DRIVEN, and even in its most violent resistance of authority preserving the love of order and the reverence for religion.

It seems from the very first that this parish and its clergy, had a little tincture of a more liberal doctrine, than was prevalent in the country. This appears from several considerations,—1st that Parker was the scholar of the mild Archbishop Usher ; 2d that he was dealt with and visited by his brethern in what was called the third way of communion* for his suspected heresy ; 3d, the Catechism published by Mr Noyes, his colleague and kinsman, was a remarkably cautious one, stating none of the doctrines of Calvinism in their most offensive terms. At any rate, the seeds of Arminianism were early sown in this country. This parish in a later day, led the way. It may be proper on this occasion and standing on this ground, to cast a transient glance to that system ; to show its rise and influence ; the causes that produced it ; to remark its strength and weakness, and yield a passing tribute to those mild but mistaken men, who defended it by their learning and adorned it by their example. Whatever may have been the defects of that system, it was permitted to exist by God ; perhaps he used it as a moral PURCHASE to take some other more plausible errors out of the way of his people.

In the ancient Church it cannot be doubted that the Palagian tendencies long preceded the system of Augustine.—This was perfectly natural. Men must complete their ideas of free-agency ; responsibility ; individualism as opposed to the confused physical depravity of paganism, before they

* For an account of what was called the third way of communion, see the Cambridge Platform, chap. xv. See the anecdote of Mr. Parker's learning and liberality in Coffin's History, page 375. See also Dr. Popkin's two Sermons on leaving the Old House and entering the New.

will be led to speculate on free grace, and justification wholly by faith. They must read the elementary page before they proceed to those more correct and more refined ideas, taught in the Epistles of Paul and confirmed by the whole Bible. But in modern times the process was different. The reformation was an outbreak from the grossly developed Pelagianism which preceded it. All was works, works; merit, human merit, in the days of Luther. The vast fabric of the Romish Church was built on this predominating idea. The reformers, startled at such doctrines and disgusted at the effects they saw produced, set up the noble doctrine of JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH, as an antagonist power—to sweep away all these fatal delusions. But Luther, while he opposed a scriptural truth to a traditional error, narrowed the definition of faith; he made it too much resemble a blind persuasion of a personal interest in Christ.* Hence the antinomian tendencies which soon manifested themselves, and which have always been the bane of an incautious orthodoxy. He did not make his system meet the wants of our whole moral nature; though he set up the pillars of truth, their leanings were often wrong; his language was often imprudent and excessive, and even when he meant well, conveyed a wrong impression; hence the reaction was visible in the mind of

* Meleher Adam in his Lives of the Reformers tells a story of Luther, which perhaps may show how he became partial to that view of faith afterwards deemed so dangerous. When he was young he was very sick: his views were then indistinct, he was very anxious about his spiritual state, and was visited by an old man whose conversation he very much enjoyed; and this man told him, in repeating the creed, I believe in the remission of sins—he must believe for himself and not in general, that his sins were forgiven him:

Sæpe etiam senis cujusdam sermonibus se confirmatum esse narravit: cui cum consternationes suas exposuisset, audivit eum de fide multa differentem, seque deductum aiebat ad symbolum, in quo legitur: *Credo remissionem peccatorum.* Hunc articulum sic ille interpretatus erat: *non solum in genere credendum esse, aliquibus remitti; ut & Dæmones credunt, Davidi aut Petro remitti; sed mandatum Dei esse; ut singuli homines nobis remitti peccata credamus.* Et hanc interpretationem confirmatum dixit *Bernhardi* dicto; monstratumque locum in concione de annunciatione, ubi hæc sunt verba: *sed adde, ut credas & hoc, quod per ipsum peccata tibi donantur. Hoc est testimonium, quod perhibet Spiritus sanctus, in corde tuo, dicens: dimissa sunt tibi peccata tua. Sic enim arbitratur Apostolus; gratis justificari hominum per fidem.*

This afterwards became the favorite phraseology of Luther, and laid the foundation of the subsequent excesses of Antinomianism. Even Melanethon says, *Non potest cor diligere Deum, nisi ostendatur placatus.* See Deoderlein's Theology, Vol. II. page 150.

his warmest friend, Melancthon; and hence, in the next age, a new system arose,—placing man on his own agency; and thus attempting to justify the ways of God to man. In this way, the polemic attraction was continued too long; and very few even of the most pious and learned, in that agitated age, found the independent path to scripture and to truth. A similar course occurred in New England.—The stern orthodoxy of our pious fathers uttered some truths with great emphasis, and others, I suspect, with a feeble voice. There are some subjects which even now, I should not go to volumes of the Calvinists to find the best discussion of. Tillotson's sermon on evil speaking; Dr. Barrows' discourses on industry; Sherlock's views on restitution and reparation as absolutely necessary to the sincerity of repentance, are far better and more evangelical than any thing similar found in the writings of men, who over and over again insist on the depravity of man and a salvation by a free pardon. It is often permitted by the high wisdom of God, whose ways are not our ways, and his thoughts not our thoughts, that when a sect has long prevailed, however firm their foundation, that will not, or cannot utter his whole truth, that he raises up another sect who will supply the delinquency; and leave a wise posterity to improve by the general result. Thus even Arminianism had its causes and executed its mission.—It operated like the ballast-chests, which I have seen in some of our steam-boats, that when chance or curiosity draws the passengers all to one side, these machines are rolled to the other, in order to restore the balance; to trim the vessel, and perchance to prevent a destructive explosion.

But Arminianism also had its evils; it was too apt to overlook those rousing truths which disturb the sinner's conscience, and it was more remarkable for cherishing the elegant decencies of life than for awakening the stupid, alarming the secure, or calling the prodigal from his husks

and swine to the penitent recesses of his father's house.— It was not a system of deep feeling; it had little impulse and no zeal. This system also in its turn produced its reaction, and when after a long slumber, the intensest feeling spread over the Churches—when that extensive revival began, so auspicious in its commencement, so disastrous in its close—when dazzled by those spiritual images, which the poor soul of man in its boundless cravings is doomed always to reach after and never to grasp, the public mind staggered under the mighty vision, I cannot but think that the Arminian Churches, stood as a barrier to check the fanaticism which threatened to inundate the land. The Rev. Mr. Parsons, of the Church that went out from this, one of the warmest revivalists of that day, tells us in one of his manuscript letters—that “many in the land and some among us who seemed for a time to run well, have since fallen away, some into gross wickedness, and others into wild enthusiasm, and have embraced several strange doctrines; some affirm they have undergone something equivalent to death, and therefore are now immortal and without any remains of sin; yea, beyond the possibility of sinning; that in this state they are to have children; born, not of their former wives, but of those women who have entered the immortal state, as well as themselves; that their children are to be a holy seed, and so the latter day glory of the Church is to commence and be carried on in that way. Others, who renounce these pernicious principles, ramble about the country, and when they can get admittance, creep into houses and teach the audience that human learning is the cause of driving away the spirit of God from the Churches; one of this sort has lately been among some of my people, inculcating these principles, and telling them that God had laid aside men of learning, and taken farmers and tradesmen to carry on his work. The principle seems to be taking with a few weak people, but I trust God will not suffer Satan to go on in this way.’

How exactly is the present age a reproduction of the past! And how true are the words of the preacher in Jerusalem—There is no new thing under the sun!

The foundation of religious excess is laid in our nature. While religious motives sweep with energy over the hearts of men, there will always be some of such a temperament, that the action will be excessive on the trembling chords of their moral and physical composition. There will be young men who will see visions, and old men who will dream dreams; and even a divine action on the soul will not expel all errors, or supersede all the imperfections of its peculiar structure. Take Davenport, for example, the great agitator of the days of Edwards and Whitefield. There cannot be a moment's doubt that he was sincere—he was an earnest man and no hypocrite. But what was he, and where was the fountain of all his delusions? He was a man of no delicacy of taste, no sense of propriety; a man in whom the religious element was strongly developed; who saw the world as we all do, through his own ideal; who was for bringing every man's religious experience to his own standard; and who in prostrating all the forms of life only considered himself as manifesting great zeal for the glory of God. Now in every age there will be Davenports; not only men to blow his trumpet, but thousands of hearts that will respond to the sound.—It is fixed in the permanent laws of our nature; as the blessed sun himself pouring down his light and productive warmth on different latitudes, produces the banana and the incense tree of India, as well as the stunted pine of the Norway coast; so the spirit of God, acting on different hearts with different susceptibilities and under different degrees of cultivation, is likely to produce all the diversities that we see repeated in every age. There must be the river and its mounds, the law and its circumscription; this man's impulse must be checked by that man's caution; and God's purposes can only be executed by all

the varieties of action, which form the aggregate of human life.

Let us always remember, however, that God's wisdom forms no excuse for our known defects.

Yet after all, it must be granted that the Arminian system was very defective, and formed a very defective people. To check enthusiasm, or to rectify high speculation is not the sole duty of man. When I lay the writings of these cool and cautious men alongside of the Epistles of Paul, I cannot but think, I find a great discrepancy. In laying open the character of man, in stating the terms of our acceptance with God, I cannot but think they alike eluded reason, opposed scripture, and shocked the deepest feelings of the soul. How can a poor sinner, whose best righteousness is as filthy rags, think of appearing before the terrible throne, unless clad in the righteousness of his Savior; unless accepted through the free justification, which is the gracious fruit of God's electing love?

This pulpit was (formerly at least) distinguished for its occupants. Here were displayed the mental treasures of the learned Parker; and the moderate Calvinism of the judicious Noyes; men who taught your fathers to unite in their practical creed, the grace of God with the duties of man; men who said that we must be justified by our faith, but that faith itself must be justified by works. Here Woodbury, and Richardson and Tappan, presented to your memories the faith they inherited from their fathers. Here the mild and prudent Tucker* steered the bark of the church through troubled waters in stormy times;—disarming his enemies by his meekness, and teaching

* Dr. Tucker, though managing his pen with some polemic keenness was in private life a man of great amenity and cheerfulness. He was surrounded by foes, and felt himself called on to exercise some vigor in his own defence. The following anecdote is told of him, which may illustrate the moral of this sermon. Being one day overtaken by one of the *new-lights*, the good layman thought he must admonish the deficient priest. "Ah, Dr. Tucker," said he, "all your good works will never carry you to Heaven." "Well, sir," was the reply, "you will never go there without them." So between them both, they got both sides of the truth.

his people to conquer by love. Here the evangelical Moore preached Christ crucified; and to his faithful orthodoxy united that ardent charity which always gives it ten-fold power. The last preacher (previous to him who now addresses you) is still alive.* Some of you remember him. You remember the purity of his mind; the impartiality of his doctrines; the independency of his sentiments; the conscientiousness of his life.

Slave to no sect, he took no private road,
But looked through Scripture, up to Scripture's God.

Known for his profound learning, he was removed from this parish to a distinguished place in a neighboring Seminary. "Age and infirmities," he tell us, have prevented his being with us this day. May his sun go down in serenity and peace, near those Academic shades which he has illuminated by his learning and adorned by his example. May we all be benefited by his humble erudition; his childlike simplicity; his frankness of purpose; the characteristic caution by which, in stating a sentiment, he was always careful never to overpass the truth.

I can say of all my predecessors, what I hope will be said of me, when I shall have become the mouldering tenant of yonder graveyard; that they caught some of the fragments of the seamless robe of Christ, which is too often parted in this polemic world. They were all honest men, felt their responsibility, and meant to declare the truth. Though belonging to different systems, none of them went to extremes in these systems. This pulpit has always been sacred to moderation. If judicious preachers have had some success here in forming an intelligent audience, perhaps an intelligent audience has had some effect in producing judicious preachers.

In this review we may find abundant reason to adore

* John S. Popkin, D. D., formerly Greek Professor of Harvard University, the immediate predecessor of Dr. Channing, Boston, and for twelve years a cherished and respected pastor in this place.

the goodness of God, in the protection of our lives. He who guided the fathers has blessed the children. For two hundred years his temple has stood on this consecrated ground. How many sermons have been preached; how much truth has been uttered; how many warnings given; how many streams of consolation have been poured into bleeding hearts; how many penitential tears have mingled with this sacred dust! Could the long array of souls pass before us, who have gone from this temple to perdition or to glory, we should certainly feel that we are standing on holy ground. We should say: THE PEOPLE ASKED AND HE BROUGHT QUAILS AND SATISFIED THEM WITH THE BREAD OF HEAVEN. HE OPENED THE ROCK, AND THE WATERS GUSHED OUT; THEY RAN IN THE DRY PLACES LIKE A RIVER.—FOR HE REMEMBERED HIS HOLY PROMISE AND ABRAHAM HIS SERVANT. AND HE BROUGHT FORTH HIS PEOPLE WITH JOY, AND HIS CHOSEN WITH GLADNESS. AND GAVE THEM THE LAND OF THE HEATHEN—THEY INHERITED THE LABOR OF THE PEOPLE. THAT THEY MIGHT OBSERVE HIS STATUTES AND KEEP HIS LAWS. PRAISE YE THE LORD.

A few obvious reflections may close this subject—

In the first place, we see the great importance of preaching the whole gospel; of not letting one feature of its aspect strike out another. We must NOT SHUN, as the scripture expresses it, TO DECLARE THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD. Such is the imperfection of human nature; such are the limited conceptions of the narrow mind of man, that we often fasten on a few doctrines which absorb our whole attention; we forget that the commands of God are exceedingly broad. Such have been the faults of every age. More harm has been done in this world by partial truth than by positive error. We are so very cautious that we are afraid to let God speak to man in all his fulness.—Hence we see the spectacle of one sect telling the truths that another sect will not tell. The Church exists in parties, and the truth is told in fragments. Some lay a no-

ble foundation and never build upon it, and others build a lofty edifice without a foundation. The truth is, the church has never yet escaped from the polemic undulations. One truth is polluted because the Romish church possesses it. Another savors of Socinianism. Another fosters human merit. Another has led to fanaticism, and people have been taught so to hate heretics, that they have hated also that nucleus of truth, from which all heresy must derive its form and plausibility. It is high time to awaken from this deceitful dream; and fill our people with the amplitude of truth, and with the fullness of God.

In the second place, the history of this Church may throw some new light on the principles of Toleration.—It has been much disputed who has the credit of handing this precious jewel into the world. Some say it was John Goodwin, the Arminian. Some advocate the claims of Dr. Owen. Some mention Cromwell; some applaud the Quakers; some give the laurel to Milton. Locke's letters on Toleration and the commentary of Bayle, the French sceptic, have been mentioned and applauded.—It has always seemed to me that it is too precious a gift to belong to any party, or man. It was the gift of God himself. It came through the medium of his special providence. The fact was, it sprung up, in Holland through the pressure of circumstances; it was forced on them as a reluctant gift, which they almost violated their consciences in taking. It was a cold political expediency which slowly brought them to adopt a measure, now numbered among the clearest and the most positive rights of man. After Philip II. had driven them to madness and rebellion, by his bigotry and cruel oppression, the fragments of all sects were obliged to unite against him.—Their danger produced their union. Holland and Flanders were to Europe what Rhode Island was afterwards to New England. A spectacle was exhibited, in the midst

of the Christian nations, of a country enjoying the benefit of their daring indifference. The example of the Netherlands was quoted, and thus the benefits of toleration were seen in practice before any genius was so bold as to teach them in theory. The same thing was acted on a smaller scale between this mother church and her rebellious daughter. I should be glad to claim for the old Arminians the credit of having advanced on their age, in their ideas of toleration. But no ; it grew out of difficulty ; it was the fruit of time. When it became apparent that the sects must part, and must both exist ; that is, one could never put down the other—then arose the idea of a compromise. And here let us observe, that the question of toleration, like many other political questions, is one wholly of expediency. In the origin of New England, toleration would not have been wise. This country derived its character ; its energy ; its piety, almost wholly from its uniformity. The wisdom of toleration depends upon the degree of advancement among the people. Take the case of the Sandwich Islands as an example : when the popish delegation first invaded those islands, our pious missionaries took some measures to resist them, which contradict all our theories of toleration. They were right. The people were just passing from a pagan state ; they were infants in knowledge. They were all united, and the benefits of toleration would have been merely nominal, while the evils of distracted councils would be infinite. But when a people have reached a certain stage of improvement ; when liberty has been enjoyed and different sects, based on intelligent principles, must exist, then religious liberty becomes practical wisdom. This hard lesson our own history has taught us, and for this gift, as well as many others connected with the gospel, the glory must be given to God alone.

In the third place, our history may throw some light on Christian Union. Our Saviour in his last solemn

prayer, made it his earnest petition that all his followers might be one—"as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they all might be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." Here he seems to contemplate a unity in his church which has never been verified; and from the known principles of human nature, we see not how it ever can be. As men advance and improve in thinking, they seem less likely to adopt one creed, and while their tastes differ, they will not be disposed to fall into the same organization. Even piety does not secure one train of speculation, or one form of church government. The Romish church was an elaborate attempt, the work of successive ages, to produce an outward union—by laws and by authority; and yet the attempt failed; for all the colors of opinion could only be made to agree by spreading sackcloth over the sun and inducing darkness over the earth. I humbly conceive, that our little history may throw light on this subject. Perhaps the congregational system (with that mitigated Presbyterianism with which it is in fellowship) is most admirably adapted to be the foundation of all the unity that Christ ever contemplated. For mark our history; our very troubles may instruct us. This religious Society and that in Federal street were formerly one. They disagreed; they separated; the rebellious daughter went from the house of her severe mother. Their disagreement was on points of importance, and threatened to be eternal. But, behold; in the change of times, the same doctrines are preached in both the pulpits; the same views are cherished by both the churches; and those that denounced each other in 1744, found, in a quiet grove, on July 4th, 1846, "how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."* Most instructive

* This alludes to a Sabbath-School celebration, in which the two societies joined, during the current year. An address was made by the Rev. Jonathan F. Stearns, in which he happily alluded to former dissensions, and our present unity and peace. One of the mottos was, "*Behold how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.*" It was an occasion when Profit came robed in Delight.

fact! It shows that where there is real union, it will pre-
vade its simplest forms; where there is none, it is best
not to be held together in iron chains, which only in-
crease the discord. I say again, that congregationalism
is the most admirable system to produce that unity. Its
simple machinery works well. “AND ABRAM SAID UNTO
LOT, LET THERE BE NO STRIFE, I PRAY THEE, BETWEEN ME
AND THEE, AND BETWEEN MY HERDSMEN AND THY HERDS-
MEN, FOR WE ARE BRETHREN. IS NOT THE WHOLE LAND
BEFORE THEE?—SEPARATE THYSELF, I PRAY THEE, FROM ME;
IF THOU WILT TAKE THE LEFT HAND, THEN WILL I GO TO
THE RIGHT; OR IF THOU DEPART TO THE RIGHT HAND, THEN
WILL I GO TO THE LEFT.”

Lastly,—Let us all, instructed by past excesses, join in
promoting a genuine revival of religion. I know not
that it would be wise to confine ourselves to the exact
type which New England has hitherto exhibited. All
parties agree that the benefits of 1740, were purchased
at a great expense. The church should be instructed by
its own experience; and perhaps St. Paul himself, had
he been present and seen the commotion of that agitated
time, might have whispered, even to Edwards and White-
field, what he before said to the Corinthians,—YET SHEW
I UNTO YOU A MORE EXCELLENT WAY. All I ask for is,
a revival which shall end well; for I read—THE WORK OF
RIGHTEOUSNESS SHALL BE PEACE, AND THE EFFECT OF RIGHT-
EOUSNESS QUIETNESS AND ASSURANCE FOREVER. O, may God
bless his vineyard, and may these ancient churches, emu-
lating the virtues of their fathers, and instructed by their
very errors, go on receiving the dews of Heaven, till the
wilderness becomes a fruitful field, and the clouds of our
partial illumination shall be lost in the permanent efful-
gence of the millennial day.

H Y M N ,

COMPOSED FOR THE OCCASION, BY HON. GEORGE LUNT.

I.

How glorious, Lord, thine earthly temples rise !
And every solemn spire, that meets the sky,
Draws Heaven descending nearer to our eyes,
And lifts the rising soul to soar on high.

II.

In dens and mountain-caves thy saints of old
Through clouds and darkness sought thy promise given :
Our brighter vision bids us view unrolled
Thy gospel, beaming in the blaze of Heaven.

III.

Up to thy holy throne, our fathers' God !
How oft our lips the cheerful song have raised !
In doubt and fear thy sacred courts they trod,
And praised thy name, but trembled while they praised.

IV.

Even here, where nature breathes so calm and still,
And all is peaceful as thy holy word,
In arms they prayed, and stood to hear thy will,
And grasped their warlike weapons as they heard.

V.

Their quiet graves are lying all around,
Long, long have slept their trials, doubts and fears,
And mossy stones that lowly press the ground,
Record their tale of twice a hundred years.

VI.

Oh, for those fervent, simple hearts of yore,
The zeal they felt, the conquering faith they knew !
For this we'd welcome all the toils they bore,
And joyful seize their final victory too.

VII.

Behold, an evil age thy truth perverts,
The plain and sacred truth thy books afford,
And light but darkens in their wandering hearts,
The Gospel glories brightening round thy word.

VIII.

Yet, Lord ! on us bestow thine ancient grace,
To lead our footsteps where our fathers trod,
That children's children here, an unborn race,
May know and prove thee still, their fathers' God !

APPENDIX.

FROM the first settlement of Newbury, in 1635, till 1642, the inhabitants had made the "lower green" on the banks of the "great river", as it was then called, their central place of business, and of course had there erected their "meeting house," but in the latter year, as appears from the following extract from the town records they had determined on a removal :

"Whereas the towne of Newbury well weighing the streights they were in for want of plough ground, remoteness of the common, scarcity of fencing stuffe and the like did in the year 1642 grant a commission to Mr. Thomas Parker, Mr. James Noyes, Mr. John Woodbridge, Mr. Edward Rawson, Mr. John Cutting, Mr. John Lolwe, Mr. Edward Woodman, and Mr. John Clark for removing, settleing and disposing of the inhabitants to such place as might in their judgements best tend to theyr enlargements, exchanging theyr lands and making such orders, as might bee in theyr judgments for the well ordering of the towne's occasions, and as in their commission more largely appeareth, the said deputed men did order and appoint John Merrill, Richard Knight, Anthony Short and John Emery to go to all the inhabitants of the towne, taking a true list of all the stock of each inhabitant, make a true valuation of all theyr houses, improved land, and fences, that thereby a just rule might be made to proportion each inhabitant his portion about the "new towne" and the removing of the inhabitants there."

"It was further ordered that in respect of the time for the inhabitants removing from the place they now inhabit, to that, which is layd out and appointed for their new habitations, each inhabitant shall have theyr house lotts *four years* from the day of the date of this commission."

In the town records of Jan. 2, 1646, the following extract is found :

"Wee, whose names are in the margent* expressed for the settleing the disturbances, that yett remayne about the planting and settleing the *meeting house*, that all men may cheerfully goe on to improve theyr lands at the new towne, doe determine that *the meeting house shall be placed and sett up at or before the twentieth of October next* in, or upon, a knowle of upland by Abraham Tappan's barne within a sixe or sixteen rodd of this side of the gate posts, that are sett up in the high way by the said Abraham Toppan's house."

* James Noyes,
John Lowle,

Edward Woodman,
Richard Knight,

John Cutting,
Henry Short."

A
S E R M O N
ON THE
NATIVITY OF OUR LORD,
PREACH'D IN
ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, NEWBURYPORT,
A. D. 1837.
TO WHICH IS ADDED,
A SUCCINCT HISTORY,
OF
THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH
IN
THIS TOWN AND VICINITY.

BY
JAMES MORSE, D. D.
RECTOR.



Benefits of the Gospel.

A

S E R M O N ,

PREACHED

I N S T. P A U L ' S C H U R C H ,

O N T H E

N A T I V I T Y O F O U R S A V I O U R ;

D E C E M B E R 2 5 , 1 8 3 7 .

T O W H I C H I S A D D E D

THE SUBSTANCE OF TWO DISCOURSES ON THE SUNDAY
FOLLOWING, BEING THE CLOSE OF A CENTURY
SINCE THE FIRST CHURCH EDIFICE WAS
ERECTED IN NEWBURYPORT.

JAMES MORSS, D. D.
RECTOR OF ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, NEWBURYPORT.

PRINTED BY
MORSS AND BREWSTER.
1838.

AT a meeting of the Wardens and Vestry of St. Paul's Church, held in the Vestry, Jan. 14, 1838 :—

VOTED, That John Dean and George Titcomb, Wardens, and Moses Merrill and Wm. Woart, Esquires, be a Committee to request of the Rev. Rector, a copy for publication of the Sermon delivered on Christmas last, and also a copy of the Discourses delivered on the Sunday following, on the rise and progress of St. Paul's Church.

GEORGE TITCOMB, Junior Warden.

TO JOHN DEAN AND GEORGE TITCOMB, ESQUIRES, AND OTHERS —

Gentlemen : — The discourses referred to in your vote of the 14th inst. are submitted for publication, in the hope that the good feeling and candor manifested at the delivery of the first, will not be diminished by the perusal from the press ; and that the record, contained in the other discourses, will be deemed worthy of preservation, and be transmitted to posterity as a memorial of the richly deserved credit and honor due to the early founders of this Church.

Affectionately yours,

JAMES MORSS.

January 24, 1838.

S E R M O N .

ISAIAH, XXXV, 5 & 6.

THEN THE EYES OF THE BLIND SHALL BE OPENED, AND THE EARS OF THE DEAF SHALL BE UNSTOPPED. THEN SHALL THE LAME MAN LEAP AS AN HART, AND THE TONGUE OF THE DUMB SING.

SUCH is the beautiful imagery employed by the prophet in describing the influence of the gospel and the blessed effects of its general diffusion, on the state of mankind. The traits of poetic genius and effusions of genuine minstrelsy, which abound in the prophetic writings, will not suffer by comparison with the best models of classic literature. In purity of sentiment, loftiness of style and beauty of description they are not surpassed;—but in their power to elevate the feelings, purify the affections and move to good and noble deeds, they are not equalled by the most finished productions of Greece or Rome. The most beautiful works of the latter, grounded on the fiction of a golden age of pastoral innocence and happiness, which has passed away;—must yield in point of interest to the prophetic descriptions of a better age, yet to come;—presenting the heart-cheering prospect of improvements to be effected in the character and condition of man, and the happiness to be diffused, wherever the human race is found. This delightful transformation, to be effected by the influence of the gospel under the mild reign of the Prince of peace, is described under the figures of wild forests and rugged mountains converted into beautiful fields and fertile plains;—and beasts of prey tamed of their ferocity, quietly feeding in pastures beside the most innocent animals. Thus the prophet Isaiah, ‘rapt into future times,’ describing the reign of Messiah, breaks forth in the following strains. ‘Righteousness shall be the girdle

of his loins and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the lion and the fatling together and a little child shall lead them; and the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.' The practical effects of this moral change are expressed by the figure of the 'wilderness and solitary place being made glad and the desert blossoming as the rose:' the peaceful effects of religion on the barbarous customs of war are described by the "beating of swords into ploughshares and spears into pruning hooks, nation no longer lifting up sword against nation, nor learning war any more; but sitting every man under his vine and fig-tree and none shall make them afraid:" and its transforming influence on the mind and heart is represented in the text by 'opening the eyes of the blind, unstopping the ears of the deaf, and causing the lame man to leap as an hart, and the the tongue of the dumb to sing.'

These striking images are used, not to entertain but to instruct; — not so much to please the fancy, as to enlighten the mind and mend the heart. A right understanding of them is therefore necessary, not only to a just perception of the pleasure to be derived to the taste, but to ensure their proper effect on the affections and conduct, and awaken just views of the excellence and value of that gospel, whose origin we this day celebrate.— In treating on the passage, to which your attention is invited, I shall proceed, 1st to explain the manner, in which this description of the benefits of the gospel is to be understood—2dly, illustrate the mode of operation, or the manner, in which its effects are produced—and close with a brief application.

I. By way of explanation, I observe, that the figurative language here used, is intended to express the *tendency* of the general prevalence, rather than the immediate effects of the first appearance of the gospel. Allowance is to be made for the peculiar structure of the Oriental languages, and of the Hebrew in particular; which is marked by laconic brevity and abounds in bold metaphors, and antithetic and weighty sentences; but destitute of that copiousness, perspicuity and precision, deemed so essential in modern compositions. Thus, in the psalms of David and elsewhere, it is implied, that righteousness is always attended by long life and temporal prosperity; when in fact the *tendency* only of it is meant to be asserted.— When Solomon says, 'Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it;' he means to assert the benefits of early education,—or in other words, that a good beginning is the surest way to a good ending; to which rule he does not mean to deny that there

may be exceptions. The glowing language in the text and other portions of the ancient prophecies is to be received with the same limitations. It was not intended to assert, that wherever the gospel was preached, or partially embraced, a miraculous change was immediately to be wrought on the whole community, or that the elements of the human character were to be supernaturally modified,—the primeval nature of our race changed,—the mass of depravity entirely removed from the human heart,—all the evil passions expelled, like demons, at its presence; or the darkness of reason immediately dispersed:—by no means; such expectations would be altogether unreasonable, and unwarranted by any fair interpretation of the language of prophecy. Men were still to continue rational and accountable beings, to exert the moral powers, to enjoy freedom, and retain the exercise of choice between good and evil; while the good effects were to be developed in the gradual extension, and ultimate, universal prevalence of the principles of the gospel over the minds and passions of mankind.

The apparent failure of its influence is therefore by no means to be attributed to any defect in its nature or tendency; but to the predominating influence of the corrupt passions of those, who openly reject, and the remaining corruptions of those, who partially embrace it. Even among nations professedly christian, the portion is small, which makes profession of their belief; and among even these, there are occasional marks of doubtful sincerity; while the best are called to struggle with remaining corruptions as well as the corrupt influence of surrounding example.—Were these impediments removed and the gospel universally embraced in truth and love, I do not say, that a state of perfect purity and happiness would ensue; for this is to be found only in heaven;—but an end would be put to the keenest sufferings of life, the judgments of God would be withdrawn, war and bloodshed would cease; and such a disposition to allow the undisturbed pursuit of the lawful concerns and pleasures of life, and promote mutual happiness, would prevail, and such an amelioration of the condition of man produced, as would amply justify the figurative language in the text.

The same happy results will not always be experienced by individuals or nations. Allowances are to be made for the peculiarities of individual and national character. Greater obstacles are to be encountered by some than by others. The gospel will shine in full lustre only among the civilized and enlightened. Christianity is far from being hostile to the advancement of light and knowledge, to the highest degree of intellectual and moral refinement, to the progress of science or to cultivation and urbanity of manners: on the contrary, its genuine influence is best displayed in the highest stage of human refinement, and its best fruits are pro-

duced on the most cultivated soil. Hence every allowance is to be made for the previous condition of the subjects, on which its genial rays are first to shine, and its ameliorating influence to be first exerted. The darkness of ignorance, evil habits and unsubdued passions, will in all cases obscure its lustre and tarnish its beauty. Our Saviour himself has taught, how essential a good soil is to the yielding of the good fruits of religion.—The seed is always good, but the heart needs culture. All the recipients, then, are not to be brought to the same standard; good fruits in equal abundance are not in all cases to be expected; improvements must vary according to talents bestowed and opportunities enjoyed. By this rule, we are taught, that judgments both here and hereafter are to be awarded. If the christian virtues and graces are all to be sought, where no advantages of early cultivation have been enjoyed, the search will be vain; and if judgments are to be made up by this rule, few will abide the test. Perfect uniformity of temperament, disposition and manners among christian professors is in the nature of things impossible. Even among the chosen Apostles, the companions and family of our Lord, there was a variety of disposition and character. There was the disciple, who on account of extraordinary meekness and sweetness of disposition was termed, ‘the beloved’; and there was the bold and zealous disciple, who betrayed many infirmities, and was often subjected to the severe reproof of his Master. Neither the mildness of John was charged with coldness, nor was the zeal of Peter a peculiar or infallible evidence of sincerity; but both were true disciples, although the latter had to grapple with more evils of corrupt nature, while the former was best beloved, and displayed with less effort a larger share of the genuine fruits of religion: while the desire, the unwearied effort, the prevailing motive of both were the same. Were these dispositions universal, — were all men *thus* to become christians, and strive to bring forth the good fruits of their profession and ‘high calling in God,’ the blessed influence of the gospel would be realized, and the charming sight witnessed, as figuratively represented by ‘the lion and the lamb lying down together, the eyes of the blind being opened, the ears of the deaf unstopped, — the lame man leaping as an hart and the tongue of the dumb being made to sing.’

II. Let us then proceed to show its mode of operation, or in what manner it produces these beneficial effects.

1. The subjects of divine grace were once blind; but they now *see*. — They were born in the darkness of the natural man, which is corrupt, and ‘were by nature children of wrath, even as others.’ Their spiritual vision was blinded by carnal lusts and passions, and they had no right discernment of spiritual objects. They ‘put evil for good and good for evil, light for darkness and darkness for light;’ and viewed the requirements

of the law with dislike and abhorrence. They saw great difficulties in the way of religion, strong objections to faith in the revealed will of God, whom they regarded as 'a hard master, reaping where he had not sown and gathering where he had not strowed.' The whole scheme of the gospel was enveloped in obscurity, and darkness rested upon the great deep. But now the views are changed, and they are ready to exclaim — '*one thing I know, that whereas I was blind I now see.*' The vail is taken off, and they behold with joy the deep things of the law. Sin appears in its true colours, altogether loathsome, destructive of human happiness and therefore opposed to the will of God. All his acquirements appear to be reasonable, the truths of his revealed will worthy of reception, and the observance of the institutions of religion, a reasonable and delightful service. 'Old things are done away, behold all things are become new.'— The word of God is their richest treasure and communion with him in his ordinances, the source of the truest enjoyment. From the sacred volume they derive the most valuable instructions; in it they find the image of themselves faithfully portrayed; they discover their disease and remedy; forsake their own self righteousness, as a filthy rag, fly for dependence to the merits and sacrifice of their Saviour; and desire to be clad in the robe of his righteousness as their only recommendation to divine favor. They see and admire the excellence, the dignity and sufficiency of Him, on whom their help is laid. His power and authority engage their confidence, his love captivates and fixes their hearts. They see the vanity of the present state and fix their affections on things above. 'In these respects, they have all of them a good understanding; however inferior in natural capacity or acquired knowledge, to the wise men of the world.' Every one may not be alike conscious of the process, but all agree in the beauty and excellence of religion; all have a lively consciousness of the worth and importance of piety and virtue, and feel a strong and hearty desire to be conformed to the will of God as displayed in the image of his dear Son.

2. Because they *see*, they *hear* likewise; their ears are unstopped. — Once they were deaf to the notes of the silver trumpet of the gospel; their ears were 'like the deaf adder, who would not hear the voice of the charmer, charmed he never so wisely.' They could not endure the doctrine of dependence; the cross was an offence; — and even the joyful songs of angels over a lost sinner recovered, was no music to them; — it was fatal to their hopes, and the death-knell to their own boasted merits — but now since their change, the chords of their hearts vibrate to new emotions; no song, so sweet, as that of Moses and the Lamb, that was slain from the foundation of the world; — no theme is so interesting or conveys such delight, as that of the scene on Mount Calvary, — no voice is so cordially

listened to, as that, which invites the sinner to Christ;—‘his blood speaketh better things than the blood of Abel.’ They are no longer mute in prayer and praise :— their ears being unstopped, their tongues are also loosed ; they can no longer be dumb and silent spectators of the worship of God ; but their hearts are ready to flow out in the channels prepared for them ; and they feel, that if *they* should be *silent*, the very *stones* would cry out. — The services of the sanctuary are their chief refreshment, — and their obligations, motives, resources, encouragements and prospects, all combine to animate them in their christian course, and impel them to press toward the mark for the ‘prize of the high calling of God.’

3. ‘Having their sight and hearing thus restored, and their hearts enlarged, they walk at liberty in the ways of wisdom.’ — *the lame man leaps as a hart*. Some christians seem to have been healed, — but have never moved ; have been cured of the leprosy of sin, but have not ‘taken up their bed and walked.’ The true christian commences actively the path of duty and his feet make haste to keep the commandments of God. Instead of creeping, as before, in a state of hesitation, ‘groping for the wall like the blind, as if he had no eyes, and stumbling at noon day as in the night,’ he is enlightened by the sun of righteousness and the path of duty is plain and easy before him — so clear that ‘the way-faring man though fool cannot err therein.’ Instead of halting between two opinions, he is satisfied as to the Master, whom he should serve, and it becomes his delight to do his will. Instead of being at a stand, as to the main object of pursuit — whether it should be honor, or power, or wealth, or fame ;—or whether he should forsake Christ for the world, or *all* for Christ ; he is settled — his object is marked, he keeps heaven in view and looks above the world and tramples its pomps and vanities beneath his feet. Of his great object he never loses sight ; as a pilgrim and sojourner here on earth, he marches forward to Immanuel’s land, ‘to fairer worlds on high.’ — Not slothful in business — not walking in the ways of the wicked, his feet not running to evil or making haste to shed blood, or following the multitude to do evil, — he is always found at the post of duty ;—walking in the straight paths of truth and justice, — visiting the sick and afflicted, distributing to the necessities of the poor, and scattering blessings by his presence in every direction. Past experiences are subjects of gratitude, but not of trust ; nor is his hope of salvation grounded on any thing that has already taken place ; nor does he place the least reliance on any present attainment ; like the Apostle Paul, he does not consider himself, “as having already attained, or as being already perfect — but ‘one thing’ says he, I do ‘forgetting those things that are behind, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God ;’ and again, says the same, ‘I therefore *so* run, not as uncertainly ; *so* fight I, not as one that beatech the

air, 'but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection,' lest after having preached to others, I myself should be cast away. His whole life is a warfare—a continued struggle with sin: like the sun in the heavens, he never stops in his course, nor ceases to bring forth the good fruits of religion, in order to keep *hope* alive: and thus he proceeds from strength to strength; running, and not being weary, walking and not being faint.'

4. And, finally, his limbs being restored from the palsy of sin, he proceeds, he joins in the voice of creation, shouting the praise of its Creator.—'The tongue of the dumb shall sing.' The whole world was formed to show forth the glory and sing the praise of its Creator; and the mighty voice which spake it into being, was echoed by 'the morning stars, which sang together.'—All was created to display his wisdom, his goodness, his power and to diffuse joy and gladness throughout the realms of his dominion. One only being witnessed with grief, and conspired to destroy the noblest part of creation; and one act only was therefore necessary to complete the splendor, and perfect the glory of the Creator;—and that was, *the work of redemption*. This was planned in the same Council, which said, 'let us make man after our own image, in our own likeness'; and accomplished 'in fulness of time' by the adorable Son of God:—who condescended to become man—'and as at this time to be born of a pure virgin';—to suffer and die to make atonement for our sins, to accomplish our redemption from the captivity of sin and satan, to reconcile and restore us to God and raise us to a state of indescribable happiness. Thus was the glory of the work of creation rendered complete by that of redemption; viewed with admiration by the blessed spirits, who kept their first estate—made the subject of prophecy and song, among patriarchs and prophets,—and in the fulness of time, ushered in by hymns of joy from the angelic choir. 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, good will towards men.' Catching the strains of the melody of heaven the believer unites in anthems of praise and thanksgiving;—commencing on earth the ceaseless song, to which the harps of angels are strung in heaven—of 'glory to God and the Lamb, who hath redeemed us by his blood—and made us kings and priests unto our God.'

Such, my brethren, is the happy result of grace in the heart;—such the duty and privilege of the believer,—such the nature and effects of religion. It first removes obstacles and then proceeds in its delightful and delighting course;—it clears away rubbish, and builds the splendid edifice;—it cuts down forests, and turns them into beautiful gardens; at its approach the arid sands become fertile fields, and the barren wastes are converted to rich pastures;—it feeds the hungry,

opens the eyes of the blind, unstops the ears of the deaf, — causes the lame to leap like the hart and the dumb to sing for joy. Its very nature is pleasant, and its leading object is to banish evil, and diffuse happiness. But these blessed effects are to be the result of its universal diffusion. When every man embraces the gospel in the love of it, we confidently predict the arrival of that state, described by the figures of ancient prophecy; ‘when the wolf shall dwell with the lamb; the desert shall blossom as the rose, and swords shall be beat into plough-shares and spears into pruning hooks, and men shall learn war no more.’

1. We learn from hence the true nature of the gospel, — its transforming power, — its wonderful efficacy in changing the nature and condition of man. It commences with the heart, the fountain of sin, which it cleanses and causes to send forth the pure streams of righteousness; it makes the tree good, that the fruit may be good also. — It is in its nature altogether remedial. Its object is to restore man to the primeval condition, forfeited by sin; and revive the image defaced by the apostacy of the pair in Eden. A new birth, is necessary to this restoration to God and happiness. This is to be accomplished through the instrumentality of a *covenant*, of which Christ is the Mediator. We are by nature ‘truce breakers’ — heirs of a broken covenant; which is to be renewed, by entering into the bonds of a new and everlasting covenant, sealed mystically in the ordinances, of which Christ is the surety and sacrifice; but entered into and ratified spiritually in the inward man.

The gospel is not given as an improved code of ethics, or as a better scheme of morals, by observing which we may attain salvation. — Its chief operation is on the inward man; it is not our external doings that are to save us, but the merits and sacrifice of Christ alone, applied by faith. Christ came, not to proclaim the doctrine of immortality; for this was known before; — nor to establish a new rule of life and conduct; for the best of moral precepts were contained in ‘the law,’ and revealed to the Patriarchs; being neither altered nor enlarged by any new discoveries in the Gospel. Nor was it his purpose, *chiefly*, to proclaim the doctrine of future rewards and punishments; — for this was the universal doctrine of all religions, Jewish and Gentile, except a small number of mistaken interpreters of the gospel system. He came not to ‘destroy the law, but to fulfil;’ to show its spirituality and power; and to purify it from the traditions, by which, in the hands of a corrupt priesthood, it had degenerated into a dull round of formal rites and ceremonies. He came to fulfil the law and make it honourable; — ‘to bring life and immortality’ to clearer ‘light,’ and by his resurrection from the dead, to assure us of our own. — Look at his instructions; — they inculcate the law of love, which pervades the Old Testament. The writings of the Evangelists are not

books of morals, but histories of the life and doctrines of Christ. The book of the Acts is the history of the foundation of the Church; the Epistles are addressed to various churches, for the prevention of heresies and divisions, and the promotion of love, peace and harmony among the various branches: — to which are occasionally appended, supports under persecution, encouragements to perseverance, and exhortations to such a line of conduct, as best became their profession. The great subjects — the sum and substance — the central point, from which all their writings diverged, were faith and repentance, — the indispensable conditions of the new covenant, — by which alone all its benefits were to be secured.

2. We learn the immense value of the Gospel; — its beneficial effects in the promotion of benevolence and peace; and in inspiring confidence between man and man; — rendering not only life but property, as safe in the keeping of a fellow being, as in our own; — in a word, accomplishing all, that the most selfish heart could wish, — or the wisest head devise, to promote the peace and welfare of man on earth, as well as in heaven. And, because it has not already done this, shall it be abandoned? Shall those evils which the craft and subtlety of the Devil or man have wrought, be alleged against it! Shall the abuses of unbelievers, or weak professors be deemed a sufficient reason for consigning it to ignominious oblivion? Shall its progress be stayed; and because to this generation it has not been developed in all its splendour, shall we impiously attempt to extinguish its light and cut off hope from all succeeding generations? What are its evils? What age or nation has it visited without the cup of blessing in its hand? Can what period or portion of the world has it alighted, from which at its approach preexisting peace and happiness fled? In what age or portion of the world were the passions of men, without its aid, kept in due subjection, and the whole aspect of society preserved pure and unblemished? If there are none, — if no such place or period is to be found, if its footsteps are marked by no evidence of mischief — then let it have free course and be glorified; — let it accomplish the work, for which it was designed; let us welcome its approach, speed its onward march, swell the ranks of its favoured followers and pave the way for its universal triumph.

Finally. What hinders its progress? The obstacles are many. The divisions, strifes and animosities of christians are among the most influential. Alas, my brethren, how fearful is our responsibility! Who can wash his hands and say he is innocent? But the universal prevalence of pride, lust, avarice and ambition are the chief and most potent. — What a barrier is thus erected by blind and guilty man against his own interest! How vast the multitude, thus leagued in hostile array against the messenger of heaven, which, in the course of his triumph, are to be swept away by the besom of destruction! But christians themselves are not duly aware of the dignity and importance of the christian charac-

ter, as disciples and followers of the exalted Redeemer—'as heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. Theirs is the greatest of all attainments—the loftiest of earthly honours. In this light has its 'time honoured name,' ever been esteemed and revered; gathering freshness, as it has advanced in age. It was in high repute even among those, who doomed its professors to the stake; who beheld with admiration and reverence, the firmness, the constancy, the courage, of these innocent victims, and their elevation above worldly considerations; and regarded them as a new race; and their joy in suffering, as a new phenomenon—an entire exception to all the known principles of human action. At the sight, vast numbers were converted; the very means used to arrest, served to accelerate the progress of religion, and 'the blood of the martyrs became the seed of the church.' And such will be the result of a faithful and just exhibition of its features and character. Let christians then bear this in mind;—keep in view the responsibility of their station and endeavour to shine as the lights of the world. Let them consider, that from them the beauty and excellence of religion are to be reflected; and on that image its success in the world must in a great measure depend. The genuine influence of the Spirit will then be abundantly poured out upon the church, and the way be speedily opened for the spread of the Redeemer's kingdom throughout the world.

In the birth of the Saviour then, one and all may rejoice. The hardened sinner only can be insensible to the testimonials of joy on this occasion. If any are anxious for the spread of unbridled licentiousness, let them this day be mute; for to them these tokens of joy must carry dejection and despair. If any are anxious to wield the sceptre of lawless dominion, and bind on the people the yoke of oppression,—let them be mute; for on this day the 'eyes of the blind are opened'; 'liberty is proclaimed to the captive and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.' But let the righteous rejoice; for the kingdom of Christ is come, which is their protection and safety;—let the sons of true prosperity rejoice; for He, who is the chief portion of their inheritance is the King, whose reign we celebrate;—let the penitent sinner rejoice; for here he beholds the Lamb, whose blood cleanseth from sin, and whose sacrifice alone can secure pardon;—let the poor rejoice, for here he finds true riches, even 'the unsearchable riches of righteousness;—let the sick rejoice, for here he finds the remedy for all his spiritual maladies, and while his outward man decays, his inward man is renewed day by day;—and let even the dying rejoice;—for this day opens the portals of Heaven and awakens the undying hope of a blissful immortality.

A
B R I E F H I S T O R Y
O F
T H E E P I S C O P A L C H U R C H
I N
N E W B U R Y P O R T A N D V I C I N I T Y ;

B E I N G
T H E S U B S T A N C E O F T W O D I S C O U R S E S
P R E A C H E D I N
S T . P A U L ' S C H U R C H , D E C . 31 , 1837 .

1 S T E P . J O H N , I , 3 .

THAT WHICH WE HAVE SEEN AND HEARD DECLARE WE UNTO YOU, THAT YE ALSO MAY HAVE FELLOWSHIP WITH US: AND TRULY OUR FELLOWSHIP IS WITH THE FATHER AND WITH THE SON, JESUS CHRIST; AND THESE THINGS WRITE WE UNTO YOU THAT YOUR JOY MAY BE FULL.

THE Gospels and the Acts of the apostles were published for the purpose of making known to the Church the foundation of faith, and instituting rules and presenting examples for the guidance of the practice of future generations. — A leading object was to preserve the great principle of ‘the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace’. — Historical narrative is the form of instruction best adapted to excite interest, preserve the connection between the distinct and otherwise discordant members, and to serve as the bond of union between successive generations. The order and harmony of the whole are thus preserved entire, and the identity of the church militant is secured to the end of time; or until the second coming of its Head. One characteristic feature pervades the whole body; which is, mutual fellowship, or communion in doctrine and practice; and the fundamental principle of this union and communion of saints, is ‘fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ’ — or communion in that faith, by which this mutual relation between the Father and the Son is effectually recognized.

This general and comprehensive purpose of Church-history is sufficient authority for narratives of the smaller portions or members; of which the use and advantage need not now be particularly argued. As this day closes the year, and a century, since the first Church was erected on the spot, on which this edifice stands; I propose to give a brief sketch of the

events relative to the origin of the Episcopal Church in this place, and the more prominent circumstances, which have attended its growth and progress to this day.

The narrative of a body of christians, differing from the popular and prevailing customs and creeds,—emerging from the midst of deep prejudices; surrounded by strong opposition,—yet springing up and laying the foundation of a work, which has survived to this day, is still flourishing and holds out bright prospects of future success,—cannot fail of being interesting and instructive.

The doctrine, whether well grounded or not, that our fore-fathers fled from the persecutions of the Church of England, was faithfully transmitted; and inculcated, as an infallible and fundamental article of faith; and the wrongs done them were painted in glowing and exaggerated colours. Hence it may well be supposed, that an attempt to introduce branches of this Church into this country, would be regarded with surprize, and meet with opposition. A few individuals, dissatisfied with the disordered state of the churches around them, finding themselves involved in a labyrinth of difficulties, and apprehending still greater yet to come, set themselves to work to investigate the causes and discover the remedy. A slight examination of the ecclesiastical history of New England will be sufficient to show, that in less than a century, the churches had fallen into a state of the wildest confusion: and were divided into numerous sects, inflamed with mutual hatred and animosity. No ecclesiastical history of any country exceeds this in instances of extravagance of opinion or variety and discordance of practice. Synod after Synod was assembled to devise remedies and bring order out of confusion. Having embarked on a new system of church-government, in which they had neither guides to follow, nor precedents in antient or modern times, as patterns to work by;—and being obliged to grope their way through new and untried scenes, and to deal with spirits, not the most tractable, it is not to be wondered, that they should be driven into wild schemes and rude experiments,—which, instead of relieving, served to render the theory of discipline more perplexing, and the practice inconsistent with public professions; that arbitrary will should take place of rule, injurious to the rights of private individuals; and a wide difference prevail between general professions and particular practices. The inevitable consequences were, a relaxation of discipline, the decay of religion, neglect of the sacraments, and general prevalence of the wildest notions on the one hand, and of irreligion and infidelity on the other.

This state of things excited the compassion and awakened the attention of the pious and benevolent in the Mother-country, to devise some method of relief. The result of which was, the formation of a 'SOCIETY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF RELIGION IN FOREIGN PARTS,' incorporated in 1701; which was piously patronized and liberally endowed by the Clergy and Laity in every part of the kingdom, and partook largely of the royal bounty. By it Missionaries were sent to various parts of the world and to this coun-

try in particular; and facilities were afforded for disseminating a knowledge of the scriptural worship and discipline of the Protestant Episcopal Church. In Boston and one or two other places in New England, where individuals of sufficient intelligence and influence resided, this Church had been planted; from which it found its way to this place.

Newbury, having been early selected as a convenient site for ship-building, the seeds of the Church were probably first sown by those, who came from abroad for this purpose. But the first decisive movement was said to have originated in a difficulty about locating a new meeting-house, about to be erected. The final decision of this question not being agreeable to the persons living in the vicinity of the Plains, and the Merrimack River, their attention was turned to the forming of an Episcopal Church.

This determination created a strong sensation throughout the State, occasioning evil surmises and violent opposition; and called forth from some leading men effusions of no very gentle or amiable spirit. Dr. Colman, the Minister of Brattle-Street, Boston, in a letter to Dr. Kennet, Bp. of Peterborough, dated Nov. 17, A. D. 1712, gives the following account of their proceedings.

‘The last year a difficulty happened, in Newbury, about placing their Meeting house. The matter was brought before our General Court, who determined according to the free vote and act of the Precinct, whereby they had obliged themselves to each other. Whereupon a number declare themselves for the Church of England; many of them I will suppose persons of sobriety and virtue, and only in a pet and to save their rate to their aged and worthy Minister, Mr. Belcher, *utterly ignorant of the Church they declare for*, nor offended in the least with the form of worship or discipline, which they had observed. They were most narrow and rigid dissenters, who would before this have disowned me in particular for the use of the *Lord’s prayer, reading the scriptures and a free admission to the Lord’s supper* than has been generally practised in these churches.’*

This explanation of the conversion of these episcopalians may have satisfied the writer of this letter; but the events proved their convictions to have been deeper and more lasting; and they gave clear and conclusive evidence, that they were influenced by reasons more weighty than pecuniary considerations; that they had something of higher importance in view, than to ‘save the rate;’ that they were guided by light, which perhaps the Doctor needed; and so far from being ‘narrow and rigid

* The Bishop probably smiled in his sleeve, while perusing the good Dr’s reasoning. It seems that the use of the Lord’s prayer and the reading of the scriptures in public, were not in good repute. ‘Thereby hangs a tale.’ Brattle street Church was suspected of leaning to episcopacy, and wished their Minister elect, Dr. C. who was then in England, to receive congregational ordination there, before he assumed the charge of the parish in Boston;—and it was a condition of his office, imposed by the parish, that the Lord’s prayer should be used and the scriptures read on occasions of public worship.

dissenters,' they were men of enlarged views and feelings, — of a determined spirit and willing to abandon 'narrow and rigid dissent,' for a more liberal and enlightened faith. They proceeded at no small hazard and expense to erect a building, which, tradition says, was immediately demolished during the night by some of their opponents. — It was soon however rebuilt, and called Queen Ann's Chapel;* and to prevent the repetition of similar injury, they addressed a petition to the Governour for encouragement and protection.

This petition contains doubtless a more accurate and satisfactory account of their convictions and feelings, than that just quoted; and as it comes from themselves, is more to be relied upon; while its truth has been confirmed by the result, and their sincerity established by their adherence to the cause they had espoused, until death.

'To his Excellency Joseph Dudley, Esq. Capt. General and Governour in chief in and over her Majesty's Province of the Massachusetts bay in New England, — the humble petition of several freeholders, and the inhabitants of the town of Newbury.

Whereas your Excellency's petitioners have declared themselves members of the Church of England and have raised a building for the worship of Almighty God, according to the manner of service prescribed in the said Church, We humbly desire your Excellency's Protection and encouragement in our just and laudable Undertakings. We are convinced that the Church of England is a pure Orthodox Church, and so are resolved to continue no longer in that [unreasonable] separation, [and schism] which has so unhappily prevailed among the mistaken and prejudiced inhabitants of this country. This resolution has occasioned ye illwill of our Dissenting brethren, who levy upon us more than Ordinary Rates towards the maintenance of their Minister, and other purposes of that nature; which act of theirs is a very great hardship and grievance to us, since we have addressed Our Right Rev. Diocesan ye Bishop of London to send us a minister, which we shall most gladly receive; but think ourselves under no obligation to any Other; — it being a thing unknown in her Majesty's dominions, yt ye members of the Church of England are obliged to contribute to the support of the Dissenting Teachers. We therefore pray your Excellency's favour, that we may not be molested for the future upon this account and beg leave to subscribe ourselves

Your Excellency's Most Dutiful

and Obedient Servants —

Abraham Merrill, Joshua Brown, Richard Bartlett, ‡ Daniel F. Law-

* It was 50 feet long and 30 feet wide and stood on the Plains; the site is now used as the burying ground.

† The words enclosed in brackets are nearly illegible, having been intentionally obliterated.

‡ The children of these two families were baptized April 18, 1714.

rens, Samuel Bartlett, Samuel Sawyer, John Bartlett, Robert Rogers, Joseph Bailey,* Richard Williams, Ephraim Davis, Josiah Sawyer, Benjamin Sawyer.

There is no date to this document ; but from the answer of the Governour, it must have been drawn up in February 1712. This is probably a duplicate of the petition actually sent to the Governour, as it does not contain the same number of signatures, expressed in the Governour's answer.

The following is a copy of the reply :

BOSTON, Feb. 28, 1711 — 12.

I received yesterday an Address and Petition, signed by 22 persons, Freeholders and Inhabitants of the Town of Newbury, setting forth, that they are declared members of the Episcopal Church of England, as by law established, and that they have rayed a building for the service of God according to the Manner of worship prescribed in the said Church, Desiring Protection and Encouragement therein accordingly, and that they have addressed the Right Reverend the Bishop of London to have a Minister sent to them, and that thereupon they may not be obliged to contribute to the subsistence of the other Ministers of any other profession, as at large is set forth in this Petition.

I am also further informed by the Reverend Mr. Harris, one of the Ministers of the Church of England in this place, that at their desire he has visited and preached to that new Congregation, and had a very considerable auditory, and that he shall continue so to do, untill their said address to the Lord Bishop of London shall be considered and orders given therein. — I am thereupon of opinion, that the said Petitioners and others that joyne with them Ought to be peaceably allowed in their Lawfull proceedings therein for their good Establishment ; and ought not to be taxed or Imposed upon for the support and Maintenance of any other Public Worship in the said Town. — Of which I desire all persons concerned to take notice accordingly.

Given under my hand,

J. DUDLEY.

To her Majesty's Justices of the Peace }
for the County of Essex, Massachusetts Bay, }

From the above it is abundantly evident that for at least a year previous, the subject of episcopacy had been agitated among them. It had been carefully weighed and examined, and the result was, the conviction of at least twenty-two freeholders, men, as Dr. Colman admits, 'of sobriety and virtue';—who had invited the Rev Mr Harris of Boston to

* His children were baptized April, 1723.

visit and officiate among them, and had requested their Diocesan, the Bishop of London, to send them a Minister. All this had the appearance of deliberate enquiry and full conviction; and gave evidence that in the course of their proceedings, they were actuated by an enlightened conscience.

In answer to their application, the Rev Mr Lampton was sent as the first Minister of this Church, A. D., 1711; but did not stay long, having contracted a bad state of health* — There are a few records supposed to have been made by him — ranging from 1711, to 1714.† — The precise duration of his ministry cannot be ascertained. The following letter from Gen'l Nicholson, appointed Agent by the Queen for examining and reporting on the state of the churches, renders it probable, that his short residence here was subject to a temporary interruption. It is addressed to the Church at Newbury.

PISCATAQUA, July 31, 1714.

Gent. — The great fatigue of my business together with a long indisposition is the reason I have not visited you. Mr Lampton is come once more among you, and as I have hitherto used my Interest, so you may depend upon the continuance of every thing in my Power for your services both here and in England.

I am gent. your affectionate, &c.

F. F. NICHOLSON.

Mr Lampton probably continued here until the autumn of 1714, and was succeeded by Rev HENRY LUCAS, in the summer of 1715. Here we have another proof of the zeal and constancy of these men; — not discouraged by disappointment in the loss of one Minister by indisposition, they immediately applied for another; and had interest and influence sufficient to procure one within a short period. The letter of Lieut. Governour Nicholson also shows in what consideration they were held. The original letter of introduction brought by Mr Lucas from Mr I. Bridger is still in being, of which the following is a copy.

LONDON, March 20, 1715.

The bearer hereof Mr Lucas is appointed your Minister, and I have no reason to doubt, but he will fully answer your expectation, and advance

* Humphrey's Memoirs.

† The first recorded meeting of the Vestry is in Mar. 30, 1714, at which Abra. Merrill and Joshua Brown were chosen Wardens. Eleven persons were baptized during his ministry.

the Church amongst you to the praise and glory of Almighty God and to the edification of many souls; and if he does his duty, you must do your parts.

As I have not made so great progress in my own affairs yet as to say that I shall return to New England again, yet nothing shall be wanting on my part, that shall contribute the smallest mite to your church's benefit and your prosperity herein.

Mr Lucas has given me his word, that he will do all that in him lies to promote true religion by a strict and virtuous life, whereby the Church will be much increased;—by which he will disappoint our enemies both in their desires and expectations. Heartily praying for your health and prosperity in all kinds, I remain &c.

J. BRIDGER.

The earliest record made by Mr Lucas* is a baptism Oct. 1715—probably made not long after the commencement of his parochial duties. Dr Humphrey, Secretary of the Society in Eng. gives the following account of him: 'His congregation was but small at first, the people having lived long in a disuse of the sacraments they still continued negligent of them. Mr Lucas, not only by public discourses advised them and used his best endeavours in private to convince them of the usefulness and benefit of both those ordinances. He used also to go to Kittery a neighbouring place and preach there; he had a large congregation, several times near 200 persons, who expressed a mighty desire to be instructed in the principles of the Church of England. He baptized here many children and seven grown persons, one of which was 50, the other 60 years old.'

Mr Lucas seems to have been an ardent man, of quick sensibility, but of a morbid temperament, and liable to deep depression. The parochial records of his time appear to be imperfect, and made by different hands. The last is the baptism of 'James, son of James and Dorothy Lucas, born March 22, 1719, — per me, Hen. Lucas.' — It is probable that, from this period till the time of his death, his health was infirm and declining. — He died suddenly 23 Aug. 1720, said to have been occasioned by suicide, in a fit of derangement. He was buried on the 25th, under the altar of the church; but there is no stone to mark the spot, nor any means of determining his age. His widow with her children is said to have returned to

* His recorded baptisms amount to 31. — The baptisms in other places than his own parish, are not recorded. — The first baptism recorded in his Church is Henry Junt, son of Skipper and Elizabeth, April 11, 1714, — by Mr Lampton.

England. The time of his ministry occupied about 5 years. The Rev Mr Mossom of Marblehead officiated here occasionally, until the arrival of his successor.

The Rev MATHIAS PLANT, the third minister, succeeded him and commenced his labours in April 1722.

Mr Plant at the commencement of his duty, Nov. 1722 drew up 'articles to be a standing order, by which the Parishioners shall proceed for the good Regulating and ordering of the Affairs of the Church for the future, and that nothing should be allowed or added to them without the consent of the Minister;' which were signed by the following persons :

Samuel Bartlett, Abiel Long, John Bartlett, Joseph Annis, Joshua Brown, Skipper Lunt, Josiah Sawyer, Benjamin Long, Steven Rogers, Ephraim Davis, Thomas Bartlet, James Harbutt, (William Somands,) John Eayre, Robert Rogers, John Merrill, William Morey, Richard Williams.

These names are in their own handwriting and are all written in a fair legible hand, with one exception, marked as above;— thus indicating them to have enjoyed advantages of early education, and to have been above the common class of freeholders.

Secretary Humphreys thus speaks of Mr Plant. 'He was appointed Missionary A. D. 1720. He was received with much favour and civility by the people of the Church of England. He began to discharge his ministerial office with success; many people showed a great earnestness for the Public worship and more continually were added to them. *They contributed their equal rates* very frankly to Mr Plant, and he was so sensible of their favour in many respects, he makes this grateful acknowledgment of it to the Society: 'I find both my people and others the inhabitants very kind to me, and although my place is reckoned the smallest, I must confess the love I have for the people, and the truly good will and extraordinary civility and kindness, I receive from them, makes me to esteem my place as inferior to none.' Mr Plant continues now (1729,) in this mission; his congregation now amounts to near 200. Some of his hearers come from towns 4, 5 or 6 miles distant and their number is daily increasing.'

Mr Plant had not been here long, before he began to experience some proofs of '*the religious freedom, which our forefathers came here to establish,*'— in renewed attempts to tax episcopalians for the support of congregational ministers. The Episcopalians agreed to defend their own rights, resist the payment, and divide among themselves the expenses incurred by law-suits. They then applied to Governour Shute for protection and obtained from his Excellency the following mandanus —

BOSTON, July 27, 1722.

Whereas upon information from the Rev Matthias Plant, minister of the Church of England, Newbury, that several persons of that and the adjoining towns have professed themselves members of the said church and accordingly have entered their names in their register-book, and that the Rt Rev the Bishop of London hath settled a minister among them and that there is a very considerable congregation; I do therefore order, that the persons, who have already declared, or shall hereafter declare for the said established church, be peaceably allowed in their proceedings, and must not be taxed or imposed upon for the support and maintenance of any other public worship in the said town or towns, wherein they shall inhabit: of which all persons concerned are to take notice accordingly.

Given under my hand,

SAMUEL SHUTE.

To his Majesty's Justices of the Peace }
for the County of Essex, or any one of them. }

The Episcopalians under this protection proceeded harmoniously for several years in the enjoyment of their Minister and their privileges. — The subject of the new church at the Water side, (as it was then called,) appears to have been first agitated about this period. This part of Newbury was become the centre of population and business. In 1726, a congregational church had been collected here and placed under the pastoral care of the Rev Mr Lowell. Several active and enterprising Merchants of this place; — among whom we find the names of Atkins, Dalton, Harris, Brown, Jenkins, Gwynn, Cottle, Woodbridge, Davis, Smith and others, who were Episcopalians, were desirous of a place of worship, more conveniently situated than that at 'the Plains.' This was necessarily attended by considerable difficulty, and out of it grew some uneasiness between Mr P. and his parishioners at the Water-side. The people at the Plains had a prior claim to Mr P.; and the only course left for the other portion was, to obtain a separate minister; — or consent to divide the services between the two churches, and make M. P. minister of both. — To this there were objections on both sides; — each parish supposing it necessary to have the services of its own separate minister. It was hardly supposeable that the Society in England would be willing to divide the mission, and support two missionaries. The object, then, could be effected only by negociation with Mr Plant; and they believed that it could be best accomplished by making him Minister of both churches and obtaining his consent to appropriate a portion of his allowance to an assistant: — upon the probable presumption, that by the

increase of the two sections, both ministers would ultimately derive adequate support. After considerable discussion, there appears to have been a tacit understanding, by which Mr Plant was to be chosen Rector, and his concurrence was given to a division of his stipend from the Society in England:—but there appears to have been some hesitation on both sides in the final adjustment.

During this state of affairs, the Church, called St. Paul's, was built A. D. 1738.—Of its rise and progress Mr P. gives the following account in a letter, explanatory of the difficulties, before mentioned, to the Rev Mr Bearcroft, Sec. of the Society in England, where he says, that he had not been here more than 2 or 3 yrs. before the late Gov. Wentworth of New-Hampshire informed him of unfavorable feelings towards him in consequence of his not acting in concert with the plan of building a new church. Many years after this, he observes, 'Joseph Atkins, Esq. as we were upon a journey together proposed to me the building of a Church by the Water side. I answered, it was a new thing and required time to consider: but in about half an hour, this answer was returned, 'I don't know but it will do very well.'—Then he said he would give £50 towards it, and I proposed to give the same sum. Here was laid the foundation of a new church by the water side; then the land was bought, subscriptions took, a frame bought, hewed and time fixed for raising it, &c.'—This letter is dated July 10, 1745: on the same date he writes, 'Then I called a meeting at the new church, delivered them the Bible and Common Prayer-book, sent out by the society for that Church. and a record was made of it in their book, signed Anthony Gwynn. Capt. Marquand was absent.*

The New Church of St. Paul's, although raised A. D. 1738, appears not to have been sufficiently finished for public worship until near the close of 1740.† After a good deal of discussion between the parties concerned, and an unavailing correspondence with the Society in England on the part of the members of this Church, (informally conducted, as Mr P. intimated,) the following instrument was agreed upon, signed and delivered.

NEWBURY, Feb. 3, 1742.

We the subscribers, members of the New Church in Newbury, called by the name of St. Paul's Church, desiring the worship of God according to the Rubric of the Church of England, do desire and do make choice of the Rev. Mr Mathias Plant as our Minister to officiate and carry on this said worship in said Church of St. Paul's, in Newbury aforesaid—in

* This record is found in the records of St. Paul's church, signed as above stated.

† It was not entirely finished inside until 1745.

witness whereof we have hereunto set our hands this day and year above written.

MICHAEL DALTON, }
EDMUND COTTLE, } Church Wardens.

Signed by ten others.

After this arrangement, he preached at stated times in St. Paul's until the following November; when it appears that this instrument had become a new source of dissension: regret was expressed at their having given it to Mr P.; and he gave notice of this new state of uneasiness to his own parish at the Plains; and of his determination, by God's assistance to perform divine service there for the future every Lord's day.— This took place Dec. 20, 1742. The instrument was in consequence delivered into the hands of Commissary Price, and cancelled, April 21, 1743.*

* During this period of trouble with St. Paul's, the members of Queen Ann's Chapel sent to the Soc. in Eng. the following testimonial of their love and respect toward their Minister.

To the Rt. Rev. Rt. Hon. and worthy Members of the Society for propagating the Gospel, &c.

We think it our bounden duty to return our hearty thanks for the unparalleled favour we have long received from your generous bounty in continuing a Missionary amongst us for upwards of twenty years.— Accept, we humbly pray you, of our hearty thanks; let not our remissness be an occasion of our punishment, we do esteem it (under the providence of God) a Great Blessing and desire the continuance of it— Our present minister Rev. M. Plant was sent over to us in the year 1721; and hath to our great comfort continued with us ever since. May God grant him a long life with us, and he merits our best wishes and thanks; and truly we have been exceedingly happy under his prudent and vigilant care of us.— There has never happened in the length of time, any disputes and contentions;— but a perfect series of tranquility has been our portion;— and we are peculiarly happy in this respect, that as we love and honour our Rev. Minister, so he reciprocally rejoices in the good will and favour of his people. Though our number may not equal some congregations, yet we can vie with any in the sincerity of our thanks; and we do with one heart and voice pray for the continuance of that Ven. Society, whose pious endeavours do so greatly tend to propagate real christianity in the world; and may the same merciful God, who first put it into their christian hearts to send us a Missionary, still incline you towards us is the hearty prayer of

Your Honour's most obed. serv'ts.

SETH BARTLETT, }
EHUD BARTLETT, } Church Wardens.

New Eng. Newb. Oct. 4, 1743.

[Signed]

Joseph Annis, Abel Huse, Joseph Annis, jr., Jn. Bailey, Abel Huse, jr., Joseph Annis, jr., Jn. Eayr, Israel Bartlett, Christo. Annis, Skipper Lunt, Joseph Coffin, jr., George Worthen, Jos. Sawyer, Benj. Coffin, T. Bartlett, Jos. Sawyer, jr., Batt. Boulton, Wm. Currier, Dan'l Allen, Joseph Whitmore, Moses Merrill, Thos. Bartlett, Joshua Sawyer, Enoch Bartlett, Jn. Bartlett, Gideon Sawyer, Isaac Morss, Benj. Long, Wm. Huse, Isaac Freese, Steven Rogers, Enoch Davis, Benj. Willet, Moses Sawyer, Benj. Davis, John Hook.

In July 1745, Mr P. wrote a long letter to the Society, justifying himself from the charge of having failed in fulfilling the agreement to allow £20 or £30 sterling toward the support of a separate Minister at St. Paul's. He considers the difficulties to have arisen in part from their refusal of induction to him as chief minister of the Church; and of his right to choose the Senior Warden. In 1747, a document was drawn up agreeably to directions received from the society, purporting to be a bond allowing £20 toward the salary of an assistant; but the claims of the members to invite into or exclude from the pulpit whom they pleased, presented a new obstacle to the adjustment. This claim Mr P. firmly resisted, as materially interfering with the rights of the Clergy, and the discipline of the church; and was resolved never to admit it. This protracted the difficulty until the year 1751;—during which period, there was a consultation in Boston between Messrs Marquand and Roberts of this church—and Drs Cuttler and Caner, of Boston, on the subject of sending over a candidate for orders, whose name is not mentioned. A Mr Wingate is also spoken of as having this object in view; but afterward declined. At length in June 24, 1751, the terms for settling this dissension were agreed on, the *independence* of the Gent. at the water side was relinquished, and Mr P. was legally inducted into the Rectorship of St. Paul's Church.*

In the minutes of his occasional labours in St Paul's Church during the period of this dispute, he takes notice of the smallness of the audiences, composed of 10 or 12 men and of 2 or 3 women; and on one occasion he mentions 7 men and 1 woman; probably owing in some degree to the existing state of irritation. During the same period, he enumerates, as

* In consequence of which he penned the following letter to the Secretary—dated

DECEMBER 23, 1751.

Rev. Dr.—In a letter I received from you, bearing date of October 21, 1747, sent by Mr McGilchrist, and received by me March 25, 1746, I am there recommended upon my being the Chief Minister of the whole parish of Newbury, to make good my promise of paying annually £20 sterling to some young candidate, when admitted into holy orders, to be my assistant at St Paul's Church in Newbury. The Proprietors having given me Induction into the said church June 24, I, to comply with the society's directions, have made choice of Mr EDWARD BASS, the bearer hereof to assist me in the said office, when admitted into orders, promising to pay Mr Bass annually £20 sterling, according to the true purport and meaning of the society's directions in that affair; humbly praying the society to recommend Mr B. to my Ld. Bp. to be admitted into orders, that he may as soon as possible return to my assistance, who now labour under a weak disposition. Mr B. came to me so well recommended that I verily believe he will be of service in the church and especially in Newbury, the place designed for his residence.

M. P.

belonging to Queen Ann's Chapel, 50 Communicants and from 150 to 200 stated hearers.*

Mr Plant appears to have been a man of strict integrity, and of a high sense of decorum, and of the distinctive rights of the Clergy and Laity. He was exact and methodical; punctual in the discharge of the duties of his station; and anxious that Clergy and Laity should each move in their distinct sphere, without interference. It had been intimated to 'the Society' that he had sometimes appeared in public not suitably habited according to the Canons;—which he resents, as a groundless charge, averring that he had not even attended the funeral of a child 'without his bands'—though he had been obliged to ride some miles to attend it. In his difficulties with the members of St. Paul's, there appear to have been some important principles involved, which he resolutely defended.—These were connected with the Minister's right to control the concerns of the church within the limits of his particular mission, which the members of St. Paul's seemed disposed partially to contest; but which deviation from order, the Society in England would not sanction. Though disposed to encourage the new church, the Society made it a condition, that his authority should be recognized, previous to relinquishing the sum, proposed for an assistant. Amid the angry feelings produced by the controversy, it may not be doing injustice perhaps, to Mr P. to suppose, that he was somewhat too distant and unrelenting; and that the reluctance felt at dividing his stipend, caused some unnecessary delay in the final adjustment. Still he deserves the credit of having retained a right, which, it

*His private records contain the following notice of an Episcopal church at Amesbury, in the copy of a letter to Dr Bearcroft, (probably 1745.)

Rev. Dr. — You will not think it amiss, if I inform you, that I have a pretty Church at Amesbury on the other side of Merrimack River. I gave a calf towards a dinner for the men who raised it, and £5 this currency for nails towards shingling it. I was going to send for glass to England for it; but this unhappy quarrel — (probably with the people of St Paul's) arising, I forbore — but it is worthy the notice of that Venerable Body. — I have preached there for many years, in a house, before the Church was built, and since in the Church, where I also had a numerous congregation.
M. P.

The names of Sam'l Weed and William Pressy are recorded, as having conformed as early as 1716, Edw'd Young, of Salisbury, Sept. 26, 1720. May 21, 1722. Mr Nichols, George Worthen, of Amesbury, Mr Leyden, of Salisbury, — declared themselves for the Church. Also, Ephraim Buswell, May 14th 1722.

Mr P. has left a notice of the following description — which needs explanation.

'I have 12 acres to the use of my church which I have been in possession of for many years.'

appears, the Boston Clergy had been obliged partially to relinquish.* — His regard also to the welfare of the portion of his flock, worshipping in Queen Ann's Chapel, — as he foresaw there might be some collision between the two churches after his death, deserves approbation. But for the change in the political affairs of our country, the effects of his wisdom and forecast would have been evinced in the present flourishing condition of both churches.

He was highly respected by his parishioners and by other denominations; although he had to pass through scenes which required extraordinary prudence and firmness. — He kept aloof from the strong excitements of the day, produced by the earlier visits of the Rev. Mr Whitefield, — the propriety of whose movements was doubted by many of the orthodox teachers among other denominations, and afterwards by himself. While other parishes lost a large share of the members, he says, that not one of his flock deserted the church.†

* History of Stone Chapel, Boston, by Rev Mr Greenwood.

†His own zeal for the distinctive doctrines of the church was manifested at a visit to Gov Belcher in Boston, on one of the Princess's birth-days. — 'Several gentlemen being personally attending, we all then present were invited to dine with the Gov. His Excellency says to Capt Atkins, When did you see my mother Partridge? how does she do? Capt A. replied, I saw her on Sunday in the afternoon at Mr Lowell's meeting. Says the Gov. 'you call ours the *Meeting-house* and yours the *Church*; but you should call ours '*the church*' and yours *the meeting*.' — The Gov then added, when I was in England, I waited upon Viscount Townshend, and talking of the state of the church in N. E. says his Lordship, I suppose you call the Church people Dissenters there, and yours the Church; as we here call ourselves the Church, and you, *Dissenters* — so that *we are the church* and you *Dissenters*, says the Gov. — Dr. Harward, the Assistant at the King's Chapel, being my senior, I waited to see what answer he would return to his Excellency's speech; (resolving it should not want an answer.) Every person present being silent, and Mr Harward and Esq. Atkins, the only two persons of the church, — being seemingly thunderstruck, — I thus addressed myself to the Governour. May it please your Excellency, I do not know, what my Lord Townshend may say to you in his chamber, nor what his opinion was in his study, but if he expressed himself in these terms to your Excellency his opinion was in direct opposition to the Lords Justices, who in their letter to Lt Gov. Dummer, ordered their Secretary to inform him, that they had no regular establishment of any church in this Province; neither have you, says I to the Gov. any other establishment, but what is on the *same footing with the sectaries*, viz. the Act of toleration. I went on very warmly for two or three minutes; but the Gov. put a stop to me by saying, Mr P. 'I shall not dispute the affair with you;' nor 'I with your Excellency.' When Mr Harward and myself returned from the Gov's house, I asked him, whether he took notice of the affront he attempted to put upon two Clergymen in their habit. He said, 'yes.' I asked him, why he did not give the Gov. an answer? He said to me, — I do not give myself any trouble about such things; I dine with him often, and do not feel disposed to dispute him, &c. — You can't help

He did not long survive the peaceful arrangement with St. Paul's. — He had contributed generously to the expense of building it; subscribed £ 50 toward it; given the glass — and the dinner at the raising, — and paid £60 toward liquidating its arrearages. He paid as he thought, full one eighth part toward the whole expense. He died on the 2d April 1753, aged 61.*

Rev. Mr EDWARD BASS, the fourth minister, a native of Dorchester, Ms. and graduate of Harvard University in 1744, succeeded the Rev. Mr Plant. At the invitation of the members of this Church, he went to England for orders; and on the 24th May 1752 was ordained by the Rt. Rev. Thomas Sherlock, D. D. Bishop of London, in his Chapel at Fulham, and in the Autumn of the same year, took charge of St. Paul's Church, Newbury. — In 1789 the University of Pennsylvania conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Divinity. In 1796 he was elected the first Bishop of Massachusetts, and on the 7th of May 1797, was consecrated in Christ-church, Philadelphia, by the Rt. Rev. William White, D. D., Bishop of Pennsylvania, Bps. Provost and Clagget being present and assisting. On the 27th, he was received and acknowledged in the most affectionate and respectful manner by the Clergy of his Diocese, then assembled in Trinity Church, Boston. The States of Rhode-Island and New-Hampshire soon after placed themselves under his jurisdiction.

The earliest record remaining of St. Paul's is dated Nov. 22, 1741; and is an account with Michael Dalton of debt and credit, — on which date he gives credit for £2, 10s. 2d.—by contribution; from which it is

yourself, if they do say so of you; what signifies it to you to show your resentment? They do not in Eng. mind us that are here — I then said to Mr Harward, I am sorry you are tied so fast by the teeth, as not to resent such a designed affront as this was; for my part, I'll eat bread and cheese, so long as I live, before I'll sneak to the Gov. for a dinner and at his table hear myself called a Dissenter and my church represented a Conventicle.'

* He married Miss Lydia Bartlett, daughter of Mr Samuel Bartlett, Dec. 27, 1722. She died Oct. 8th 1753, aged 66. They left no posterity. She left an excellent character — being a notable housewife, — and able, to adapt herself to all classes of society.

A simple stone of slate marks his grave, with this inscription:

Here lies buried
the body of the Rev Mr MATTHIAS PLANT,
born in Staffordshire in Great Britain,
Minister of this Church, and Rector of St. Paul's;
Obit. Apr. 2, 1744. *Ætatis* 62.

He built a neat dwelling house, pleasantly situated on the Merrimack, near the present Essex Mer. Bridge — which was afterwards occupied as an Almshouse, and has since been removed; a portion of it is still remaining on the old situation.

probable that public worship had been performed in it some time previous. This account is debited to seven pounds, paid Mr Plant, for seven Sundays, dated July 26, 1742. August 8th, 20s. do. Oct. 25, Paid Mr Plant for five days — £5. Subscriptions were made in April, 1743, for building 23 pews in the body of the church. April 24th of the same year, Commissary Price preached in the church, and a collection of £7. 6s. 6d. was made. May 1, 1744, a meeting of the Wardens and Vestry was holden to meet Mr Plant and give an answer to his request, in his letter of 20th April. 'We warned him of our meeting by letter 24 April, and warned the rest of the proprietors, most of whom were present. Mr Plant did not meet us: we had the books and papers belonging to the church, ready for his or any of ye proprietors' inspection. As he did not come we proceeded to business without him: we agreed with the Joiners to build 32 pews in ye body of ye church — one for the Wardens; one for strangers; the remainder the subscribers drew lots for and belong to ye following persons: Joseph Atkins, 4 pews; Thos. Tannatt, 3; Patrick Tracy, 2; Jos. Cottle, 3; John Crocker, 1; Michael Dalton, 2; Wm. Atkins, 1, Benj. Harris, 2; Edmund Cottle, 1; Witter Cummings, 2; Wm. Jaques, 1; Thomas Woodbrige, 1; Ambrose Davis, 1; Jos. Greenleaf, 1; Daniel Marquand, 1; Antho. Gwynn, 1; Jonathan Connolly, 1; Elias Jackman, 1; Ebenezer Wise, 1.*

The first meeting for the choice of Wardens and Vestry is dated 1745; at which Capt. Daniel Marquand and Anthony Gwynn were chosen. — The following vote was passed October 27, 1749. That the said Church Wardens, viz: Wm. Atkins and Thos. Woodbridge, should write to the Rev. Mr Quincy, (who had preached in said Church and now in Boston) to invite him up to preach in said church; — for which service it is agreed to give him Eight Pounds Old Tenor per week and pay his board. In Jan. 1753, a meeting was held and a committee chosen, consisting of Capt. Michael Dalton and three others to build a porch and front gallery; also the same year, another meeting was held to settle the accounts of the church and rate the pews, to meet the outstanding debts; — the best pews were rated at five shillings per Sunday, Old Tenor. The members of St. Paul's were at the expense of building their church, keeping it in repair, — raising £40 toward paying the salary of their Minister, and paying his house-rent, in order to be entitled to £ 30 from the society in England, or this moiety of the sum allowed for the mission at Newbury.

Mr Bass commenced his labours in the autumn of 1752 and Mr Plant died in April following. Of the reception of Mr B. or the particular mode

* On the list of contributors to the Church in addition to the above, are the names of Mr Plant who gave £50 and afterwards added £60 more; Thomas Smith, Capt. James Simmons, Capt. Butler, William Jenkins, John Mace, Robert Barrott, John Webster, William Green. — The Joiners contracted with, were Eben and Nathan Little. The Masonry was done by Ephraim Blaisdale.

of induction, there is no record. He recorded the burial of Mr P. on the 5th April, 1753, and his general records of baptisms, &c. commenced the same year. The first notice of the Minister is to be found in the records of 1755, when the proprietors voted to pay to the Rev. Edward Bass £225 Old Tenor, to be raised by subscription. This was probably raised in addition to £60, allowed from England. During the same year the Organ was bought of Charles Aptborp, Esq. of Boston, Treasurer of King's Chapel. This organ was the oldest in New England. An altar-piece appears to have been received at the same time. The old organ was taken down and a new one placed in its stead, Christmas 1834. — The old organ was placed in the Vestry, and afterward sold for the use of the Chapel of St. John's Church, Portsmouth.

Mr Bass, officiated in Queen Ann's Chapel once a month, till 1766. — At a meeting of the proprietors, that year, it was 'Voted, that whereas, £ 6 sterling hath been kept back from the Rev. Edward Bass on account of his attending Queen's Chapel one Sunday every month; and whereas he has now done attending on said chapel, that the Church-Wardens pay the Rev. Ed. Bass six Pounds sterling above the twenty four Pounds, which they usually paid; and also Voted that the Church-Wardens collect six Pounds from all those who attend the public Worship at Saint Paul's Church wherever they belong.' The Church at the Plains being thus deserted, soon went to decay, and in about ten or twelve years after was blown down. — The materials were left to the disposal of those, who were inclined to appropriate them to personal or other use. The furniture had been deposited, by a Vote of the Vestry, in the hands of Mr Joshua Bailey, till called for. The pews were used to finish the gallery of the adjoining Meeting-house. The bell, with the following label on it, 'presented to Queen Ann's Chapel by the Bishop of London,' is now in the belfrey of the Belleville Meeting-house. The christening-bason, which is of silver, is in the possession of St. Paul's; but the Bible and Prayer-book have disappeared.

From this period to the separation of the Colonies from Great Britain, and the dissolution of their connection with the Bishop of London, to whose Diocese they were attached, the annals of this church appear to be marked by no events of deep interest. The Rector pursued the regular course of his ministry in the bosom of his flock, and in the reciprocity of mutual esteem and affection. The congregation was composed of a portion of the most respectable inhabitants of the town; and the intervening period is distinguished by the names of Atkins, Dalton, Tracy, Marquand, Hooper, Jackson, Harris, King, Roberts, Jenkins, Woodbridge, Balch, Cutler, Rand, Coffin, and others; who took an active part in its concerns. This was the Augustan age of the town. There may have been since, more wealth and a larger population; but there has been no period, more distinguished for urbanity and politeness, and the free exer-

cise of social intercourse. The revolution, which proved fatal to the fortunes of many, and produced considerable changes in the community, has not yet restored the affability, courtesy and sprightliness of that period. No observer can help noticing the change, by whatever cause it may have been produced. The all absorbing subjects of patriotism, liberty and independence, have prevented a regard to the more trifling concerns of personal comfort and social enjoyment. Occasional effusions of this lofty, patriotic spirit occasionally broke in upon the peace and quietude of the Church; and a few sacrificed their religion to their politics, and seceded from the church, because prayers were offered for their supposed enemies. The uneasiness became such, at length, that the Wardens and Vestry requested the omission of the prayers for the Royal family, as a measure necessary for the preservation of the church. With this Mr Bass complied, at the risk of incurring the displeasure of his employers abroad. His situation was one of extreme difficulty. Although bound by the oath of allegiance to his king and of obedience to the Church; yet he felt all the ties of kindred and country; and the sacrifice of personal comfort and of foreign obligations, seemed to be demanded by the pressing exigency of the case, by the success of religion and the superior call of his country and his home. He therefore yielded to necessity and cheerfully endured the personal privations which he knew must follow. His connection with the Society was thence forward dissolved, and he became entirely dependent on his parish for future support.

THE CONSEQUENCES of this compliance on the part of the Minister were, the quieting of uneasiness among the dissatisfied members, and the uninterrupted performance of public worship, agreeably to the rites and ceremonies of the Episcopal Church, during the turbulent scenes of the revolution. The principal reasons assigned by the Society for discontinuing the missionary services of Mr B. were, the opening of his church on a public fast appointed by the civil authority, and taking up a contribution for the relief of sufferers in what was called 'the rebellion;' to which it was viewed as giving countenance. His services were therefore discontinued, and the remittance of salary withdrawn. He complained to the Society of this act, and endeavored to convince them of the propriety of his proceeding: but they remained deaf to his reasonings and inexorable to his entreaties. This might be thought a hard case; and by some, deemed a sufficient reason for abandoning the church. It would be so, if mere expediency had been the sole or chief reason for being a Churchman. But there was a wide difference between the excellence of a cause and the mismanagement of its concerns; and no good man will abandon truth, because he sustains inconvenience in its support. Much however

may be said on both sides. The Society no doubt considered themselves as having good reason for the course they pursued: but this is not the place to settle this question.

The benevolence of Mr Bass, and his readiness to perform deeds of charity had not conduced to ease of circumstances, although his family was small; he was therefore severely pinched by the change. But in these times, 'which tried men's souls,' he willingly bore his part in the common calamities. At the close of the war of the revolution, the Episcopal Church was left in a hazardous condition. Disjoined from the Mother Church;—the members detached from each other, with no visible bond of union,—exposed to the influence of crude speculations and errors, which began to abound and prevail,—and highly excited by the spirit of liberty and independence, which at times seemed verging to licentiousness;—it appeared quite doubtful at first, whether the conservative principles of the Church would be sufficiently operative, to collect the dissevered members; or whether the bond of peace and unity had survived the shock of civil and political strife, with influence enough to collect and bind the scattered fragments into one compact body. The experiment was made, and thanks be to God, and the blessed influences of his Spirit on the hearts of its members,—made with success. With one mind and heart the members looked around for the moving Spirit which was to restore them to order, and 'compact them by that which every joint supplieth.'

To understand the difficulties attending the position of the Church at this period, it should be known, that in its former state, it was an integral part of the Church of England, with the Bishop of London as its visible head; from which, by the separation of the Colonies, it was civilly dissevered; and so far as it had any legal existence, could be known only as the American Church, or the Episcopal Church of the United States.—But its organization was incomplete: it had no visible head; being destitute of that order in the ministry, to which the jurisdiction of the churches in general, and the conveying of holy orders in particular, had been originally committed, from the days of the Apostles.

Candidates for the ministry had therefore been sent from this country to England, for ordination; and were there, first ordained Deacons, and then Priests, before their return. On this account, the order of Deacons had become less known and understood in this Country. It became necessary to supply this defect and obtain the consecration of suitable persons, as Bishops for this Church. The suggestion at first created some alarm among the other denominations; but it was discovered in the result, that Bishops were quite harmless. Dr. Seabury was first sent from the State of Connecticut. But the Canons for consecrating Bishops in England requiring some modification for such a juncture; he deemed it

inexpedient to wait the tardy process of parliamentary enactment, and obtained consecration from the non-juring Bishops in Scotland. The difficulties in England were afterwards removed; and Drs. White of Pennsylvania, Provost of New York, and Madison of Virginia, were consecrated by the Most Rev. John Moore, Archbp. of Canterbury, and other Bishops assisting. The apostolic succession was thus completed, and the American church regularly organized.

St. Paul's Church, in this town, being composed of men of enlarged views and extensive influence, was early active in its efforts to aid in accomplishing this organization. But among these efforts, the elements of order and confusion were singularly blended together; the chastened spirit of piety and zeal for the church was mingled with the flame of religious freedom and jealousy of ecclesiastical domination; and eagerness for sound doctrine, with a lurking disposition to listen to the (falsely called) *liberal* and innovating spirit, which had sprung up amid the agitations and disturbances of the revolution. The conservative principles of the Church, however prevailed; the proposed alterations in the liturgy were few and not essential,—not impugning its doctrinal articles;—but chiefly of a local description and agreeing mainly with what was generally known among Episcopalians as '*The proposed Book.*'

Soon after the peace, a delegate was chosen to attend a Convention to be holden at Boston 7th Sept. 1785, 'for the purpose of deliberating upon some plan of maintaining uniformity in divine worship.' The Hon Tristram Dalton was chosen; to whom extensive instructions were given as to the measures to be pursued and the objects to be accomplished. On the 18th of the same month, the doings of this Convention were reported to a full meeting, acted on by paragraphs and unanimously adopted.

A General Convention of the Episcopal Church having been summoned to meet at Philadelphia, Sept. 1789; serious apprehensions were entertained by influential members of this congregation, at a rumour of an attempt about to be made by the churches of the Middle and Southern States, to elect and set a Bishop over the church in Mass. & N. Hampshire. Their fears however proved groundless; but they led, at the time, to an address to these States and Rh. Island, inviting the churches to unite in the choice of Lay deputies, to meet at Salem for consultation. The object to be proposed was, to choose one or more Lay deputies to represent them in the Gen. Convention to 'be holden at Philadelphia on 29th Sept. next'; with instructions as to their proceedings. The part taken by Dr. Bass on these points does not appear, but it is manifest, that from some unknown cause, jealousy of the views and designs of the Clergy had been excited; but it did not spread far, nor continue long. The proposition was favourably met by neither of the churches written to, except Holderness, N. H. In declining the proposed meeting they expressed entire confidence in the views of the clergy. The meeting, of course, was not hold-

en: but at a subsequent meeting of the proprietors of St. Paul's, votes were passed 'denying the power of any ecclesiastical body to bind the churches, unless represented by the Laity, as well as Clergy;—and as Dr Parker of Trinity Church, Boston, had been chosen to represent the Church in Mass. and N. H., yet he could act *only* for the Clergy:—two lay delegates ought therefore to be appointed. Wherefore, Voted, that this congregation proceed to elect two Delegates to represent the Laity of this church at the said Convention.*—The Hon. T. Dalton and Hon. Elbridge Gerry were unanimously chosen; to whom copious and explicit instructions were given and signed by the Committee.

The Convention of Mass. met at Salem on the fifth October 1790 to consider the doings of the late General Convention, to prepare a Constitution for Mass. and to act on any other matters that might be thought expedient. Hon. T. Dalton and D. A. Tyng, Esq. were chosen delegates. The Ecclesiastical Constitution of Mass. was adopted by this Church Jan. 16th 1791, and the same delegates, with Hon. Jona. Jackson and Mr Lewis Jenkins were a Committee to ratify the same, at the next Convention in Boston on the last Tuesday of January current.

The Ecclesiastical Constitution of Mass. having been thus warily considered, was finally adopted by all the Churches, and the Church of the U. S. thus became completely organized. All difficulties being settled and jealousies removed, the affairs of this church proceeded with great harmony; and Mr B. continued, until the close of life, in the discharge of his parochial duties. His amiable disposition, unassuming manners and catholic views endeared him to his parishioners, and secured the respect and esteem of all denominations. To uncommon equanimity of temper it was probably owing, that he was enabled to pass undisturbed through scenes, unusually vexatious and embarrassing; and to look, with composure, on the fierce conflicts of theological and political warfare.† There was a dryness and piquaney in his wit, which, though it might occasionally wound, never offended; and many of his pointed and pithy remarks are preserved and repeated at this day. He was grave, courteous and gentlemanly in his manners, dignified in his person, and in every respect the excellent pattern of a parish-priest. He was ever the welcome guest at the fire-side, free and familiar with all classes,—soothing the griefs of the afflicted, easy of access to all and able in counsel to

*Gen. Convention at Philad. Sept. 29, 1789.

†During a certain periodical excitement among other denominations, when asked his opinion as to the result, he made no other reply, than that of puffing large volumes of *smoke*, from a pipe he happened to be then smoking.

those who were in trouble. If there was any supposed deficiency in ardour and enterprize, it was amply compensated by soundness of judgment and promptness and decision in action. As a preacher, he was grave, evangelical and practical; never aiming at those flights and flourishes of pulpit oratory, by which the multitude are dazzled; but delivered plain truth in a plain manner. The unusual attachment of his flock to their Pastor was to the virtues and real worth of the 'Man of God,' rather than to any external graces or showy embellishments of the public Speaker. This attachment continued unabated, through a long protracted period of usefulness to the church and to the community.

In the year 1754, he married Miss Sarah Beck, who died without children in May 1789. Afterward he married Miss Mercy Philips, who survived him and is still living at the age of eighty-three years. By his temperate and regular mode of living, his health and usefulness were unimpaired to an unusually advanced age. During a few of the last years of his life, he suffered from occasional attacks of the gout; by one of which he was suddenly removed, on the tenth of Sept. 1803 in the seventy-sixth year of his age and the fifty-first of his ministry. On the thirteenth his remains were interred in the church-yard;— the Rev. Dr Parker, of Boston, preached on the occasion and performed the burial service in presence of the largest assembly ever witnessed on a similar occasion in this place. — A handsome marble monument, as a testimony of their respect, was soon after erected over his grave by his affectionate parishioners. During the week previous to his decease, he preached the first annual discourse before the Humane Society of this town and vicinity. On the Lord's day previous to his death, he appeared to be indisposed; but attended to divine service and preached both parts of the day, prayers being read by his assistant, who afterward was his successor. He was preparing to commence a journey to Portland, Me. the week following, to consecrate the Church then recently finished; from which he was prevented by death.

The building, in which we are now assembled, was erected in the year 1800. The corner-stone was laid May,* twenty-second, and the Church was consecrated on the eighth of October following.

The Corner-stone was laid with Masonic ceremonies, by the Grand Lodge of Mass. Divine service was performed by Bishop Bass in the second Presbyterian Church; thence a procession passed to the site of the New Church, entering under a triumphal arch, on which was written in letters of gold, HOLINESS TO THE LORD. Under the Corner-stone were deposited a great variety of coins of this and other countries of ancient and modern date, — several Medals, — a Plate engraved in Hebrew and Masonic characters, and another on which was the following inscription, — The Corner-stone of St. Paul's Church, Newburyport, (founded A. D. 1738) was laid by the Rev. Bro. Edward Bass, Bishop of Mass. and Rector of this Church, — assisted by M. W. S. Dunn, Esq. &c. : on the Feast of the holy Ascension, in the year of Grace M.D.CCC. and of the United States, XXIV.

On this occasion an Address was delivered by Rev. Dr Bentley, — a

The Communion Plate, consisting of a Flagon, inscribed on the bottom 'The gift of K. William and Q. Mary to the Reverend Samuel Myles for the use of their Majesties Chappell in New England, 1694.:' a Chalice or silver Cup with the inscription 'Ex dono Johannis Mills 1693.'—another silver Cup, presented by the female communicants of Saint Paul's Church, 1812, and a silver Paten, presented by Hon. D. A. Tyng, Esq.—with a large silver Christening Bason, presented by Capt. Richard Brown,* are in the present keeping and use of the Church.

congregational Minister of Salem; from which the following extract will be interesting—

'Not a century has passed, since the presence of a dignitary of the English Church, Dean Berkeley, the celebrated Bishop of Cloyne, and the existence of the son of a Bishop, (Burnet) as a Governour, were accompanied with distressing fears. The well-intended zeal of Arch-Bishop Secker was repulsed with all the passion, which belongs to the extreme danger of loosing religious liberty. But our happy Constitution has performed wonders. We rejoice to find the two great causes of our worst apprehensions removed. The power of any Church is only the power, which consent can give it; and the terms of any communion are not indispensable in order to possess civil privileges. Generous were the early efforts of this town† to prevent oppression in any form, when its first Pastors opened wide the doors of the Church, because through them every man was obliged to pass to his Rights as a Freeman.

How happy is it, on the same ground to remember, that from all Protestant and reformed communions, we are assembled to assist a PRIMITIVE BISHOP in the foundation of a Church, whose communion can no longer provoke a fear, and which was '*the glory of the Reformation.*' * * * Nor can we refuse to see in favourable attitudes the disposition which the Communion of the English Church has discovered in these United States.— We turn to the Constitution of Virginia. We find a Church possessing, unrivalled, every advantage for the exclusive establishment of its Communion,—refusing this opportunity to assume the power to oppress.— It boldly disclaimed all pretensions; it made the offers of equal liberty, before any sect came to claim the blessing. It did not exclude even Catholics from the highest offices of State. Happy it would be if Massachusetts could make the same declaration!

‡ Mr Lechford, who was in the Colony 1641, says, some Churches are of opinion, that any may be admitted to Church-fellowship that are not extremely ignorant or scandalous, but this they are not very forward to practice, except at *Newbury*. In this Church Mr Noyes is Pastor and Mr Parker, Teacher.

Those, who wish to examine the whole matter, are referred to a work entitled 'The temple measured,' by James Noyes, Pastor of *Newbury*, N. Eng. Lon. 1647, pp 95. sm. Quarto.

*Capt. R. B. was a native of England—came from the W. Indies to this town, married a Miss Hudson and died Feb. 26, aged 43. Capt Daniel Marquand married his Widow, from whom are the descendants of that name and one family of Jenkins. He was interred in the burying ground on the Plains.

The only record of plate belonging to this church, is contained in the following vote—'Voted also to address and solicit the Governour to grant the plate given by his Majesty for the use of said Church'—April 1. 1771.

A present of £333,33, was made by the late Timothy Dexter, Esq. for the finishing and ornamenting of the Church; of which a memorial is kept in a gilt frame, in the Vestry. The room, added to the Church and used for Sunday School, Vestry meetings and lectures, was opened Jan. 1832. — The Organ in present use was built in this town, and first used on Christmas, 1833. Mr Daniel Bayley is believed to have been the first Clerk.* He was a zealous churchman; had the care, at times, of the organ and the music, — collected the taxes and in many ways rendered himself highly useful and respected. The office of Clerk has for several years been discontinued; — but several of his posterity have inherited his attachment and still continue in the discharge of similar useful and honourable employments.

The present Incumbent of this Parish, being the fifth in succession of the Episcopal Clergy, was admitted to the order of Deacons by Bishop Bass in July 1803, — in November, he was invited to the Rectorship, and in July of the year following received Priest's orders from Bishop Moore of New-York. Within the period of thirty-four years, since he first commenced the office of the ministry here, (which is the place of his nativity, where he first entered on the sacred office, and to which his ministrations have been chiefly confined,) there have been 891 persons baptized, 191 have received the holy Rite of Confirmation; 146 couple have been connected in marriage, and 404 have been consigned to the grave, the final house of all living. The number of communicants at that time was about 30, the present number is nearly 100. Twenty-two children usually attended the catechisings; the present attendants at Sunday school are about 70. None, who have regularly attended the catechetical instructions of the Church, have been charged with flagrant offences; — none are recollected to have suffered a criminal prosecution; while a considerable number have given decided evidence of vital piety. The result, on the whole, has been highly auspicious; and we look abroad with delight on many shining ornaments of both sexes, which, either in private families, in the Church or in the more common departments of Society, are filling stations of usefulness and honour. Could they have been permitted to have been present on this occasion, the sight would have inspired lively gratitude and joy at the success, with which our humble efforts have been crowned. From this nursery, it affords unfeigned pleasure to observe, that ten persons within thirty years, have entered the ministry of the Church; six others may be added, who proceeded from the vicinity and were partially connected with it; and there are a few besides, now preparing themselves for the same profession.

The number of families, belonging to this Church may be estimated at

* His successors in office were Messrs. Thomas Tannatt, Enoch Sanborn, Andrew Laekey, Robert Hervey, Joseph Morss.

The first interment in the Church Yard was that of a child of Ambroze Davis, July 17, 1742, aged seventeen months.

about one hundred and twenty; which is larger than that of any preceding period, of which there is any authentic account. The principal losses have been incurred by death, or removal from the town. The influence of the discipline, doctrines and liturgy of the Episcopal Church, — after candid examination, has been sufficient to secure permanent attachment. After having been safely conducted by its guidance through the extremes of speculative error and fanatical delusion, the retrospect inspires them with gratitude, and with fresh resolution to persevere to the end: and having persevered ‘through evil report and good report,’ they feel justified at the bar of conscience, and gratified with the favourable suffrage of those, who once condemned them for ‘not running to the same excess’ with themselves. — There has been in this congregation a prevailing harmony and unanimity. Private dissensions have seldom been suffered to interrupt public peace: and if the evidence of righteousness and peace, — a disposition to do good,* to fear God and keep his commandments, connected with sound doctrine, be deemed conclusive, it will be within the bounds of charity to admit that there has been a general prevalence of religion. In other communions, there has been greater display: — but if humility, enlightened zeal for divine ordinances, and the honour of God’s house, and uniform delight in the holy exercises of the temple, be evidence of the effusions of the Holy Spirit, then we have experienced bright tokens of its refreshing dews and of the fulfillment of the gracious promise made, ‘where two or three are gathered together.’ If we have not partaken largely of that wisdom, where bitter envying and strife are; we think we have not been destitute of that, which ‘is first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits without partiality and without hypocrisy.’ And if we have not been agitated or overwhelmed by the tempest, the thunder or the earthquake, we trust we have not been destitute of, — nor deaf to — THE STILL SMALL VOICE.

THE FLOURISHING STATE OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH in the period last mentioned, deserves grateful notice. In the State of Massachusetts, at the beginning of the present century, there were but five or six congregations, that could be considered as in active operation; and many of these might be regarded as in a feeble, languishing condition. Puritanical prejudice had not subsided; nor had the Church recovered from the effects of the revolution or the political and polemical feuds and animosities of the succeeding period. Suspicions were harboured of its political connection with the Church of England, and of its design to perpetuate the civil as well as

*The various charitable contributions at the Communion, and Christmas celebrations, during the last thirty years, amount to about \$3,000. — Other Missionary and Easter Collections for destitute churches would probably amount to nearly the same sum. There is a fund, belonging to this Church, called THE BASS FUND, in the hands of the Trustees of donations, in Boston; to which several valuable legacies and donations have been made.

ecclesiastical government of that country. The Episcopal form of government, it was said, was derived from the political;—its design was to favour monarchy; and it was utterly uncongenial with the spirit of republican institutions: than which nothing could be more foreign from the truth;—nor can it be reconciled with true candour to foster such idle prejudices. It is almost too late to give it as new information, but it may not be wholly useless or foreign from our present purpose to declare, that the Episcopal form of church government was derived solely and directly from the sacred scriptures;* that it was the only form, known in the whole christian Church from the days of the Apostles, until the period of the reformation; and is the same with that, which was established by the Apostles of our Lord, under divine direction, and has been transmitted from them in unbroken succession. The Protestant Episcopal Church has been pronounced by celebrated divines of other denominations, ‘the fairest daughter of the reformation’ from popery;—retaining more of the features of the primitive church, than any others of its varied progeny. It was the work of the distinguished Martyrs, Cranmer, Latimer, Ridley, Rogers and others, who sealed it with their blood.—But these facts were concealed from the community; no efforts were spared to impress the idea, that the Episcopal Church was a novelty, an innovation on ancient usages, and to excite alarm at its progress as dangerous to freedom. In this case it arose from an almost overwhelming load of prejudice and error. Extraordinary freedom, firmness, moral courage and independence of mind became necessary to espouse its cause.—The idea of its gradual extinction in this country was becoming generally prevalent; and those, who engaged in its ministry, did it at this fearful hazard. They commenced the work; and feeble, as were the means, the Great Head of the Church rendered them successful. The feeble and dispirited congregations increased and multiplied. The number now amounts to about fifty in Mass.; the increase in the U. S. since the close of the revolutionary war, is from about ninety — to upwards of eight hundred. The ratio of its progress for the last ten years has been greatly on

*See ‘Episcopacy tested by scripture’ — a small pamphlet rich with varied and conclusive reasoning — by Bishop Onderdonk, of Penn.

It is surprizing, when the scriptures so plainly speak of the order of the Apostles and of presbyter Bishops, and Deacons under them; and when it is admitted, that the same three orders in the ministry were universal in the church, in the third century, and traced by themselves to the Apostles; that it should be contended, that presbyterianism prevailed in the intermediate period!! Where is the proof? Can it be supposed possible, that such a change could have been made within two centuries; and not a note of remonstrance be heard; nor a shadow — or a relic of presbyterianism or independency be left behind?

the increase; and the demand at this day, vastly exceeds the supply of Candidates. It has two Theological Seminaries — one at New York and the other at Alexandria, D. C.; and one College at Hartford; besides other literary Institutions in different parts of the country.

Its doctrines are evangelical and orthodox; its form of discipline or government is Episcopal, and its mode of worship liturgical; being conducted by the use of prescribed forms; in which respect its difference from the prevailing denominations of New England, is chiefly visible where the worship is conducted by extemporaneous *forms*. They are both *forms*; but the one is supposed to be offered without premeditation and on the spur of the occasion, sometimes contradictory and perpetually varying;—while the other is precomposed, and carefully adapted to the purpose, in such a way, that all the worshippers may unite, and all the churches, throughout our land, with one voice and one heart, offer the same supplications and the same incense and homage of gratitude and praise. They thus become the Common Prayers of the Church; and as this is but one body, the spouse of Christ, she continually offers the same devotions to her spiritual Head.

The necessity of prescript forms of prayer, in *social worship*, is daily becoming more obvious and generally felt and acknowledged. That the language and subjects of prayer and praise should be previously known and understood by all who are to join in them, is one of the most obvious dictates of reason. If public worship really constitutes one of the main, characteristic features of the christian dispensation, and one of the most essential duties of its professors;—a liturgy or common form, by which this worship is to be performed or expressed, seems to be an integral part, and an indispensable appendage of the system. Thus, in the ancient history of the church, we read, as a matter of course, of its ‘Common Prayers,’ ‘Constituted Prayers,’ and ‘Solemn Prayers.’ A Church, therefore, without any such ‘Solemn Offices’ for the Sanctuary, any guides for the devotions of the assembly, or any established forms, through which the united aspirations may ascend to the Divine Head, verges near to an anomaly, if not to a solecism.—Besides, is not the whole subject of forming a liturgy, or framing suitable language for the devotion of a worshipping assembly, an affair of too much solemnity, and fraught with consequences of too much importance in time and eternity, to be entrusted to the momentary feelings and invention of any single individual? Should we be willing to entrust to unpremeditated efforts, matters of any magnitude, which were pending before an earthly tribunal? That offices of devotion for a worshipping assembly should be precomposed and express the united homage of the whole Church, seems, therefore, a truth so plain as

hardly to fail of presenting itself with great force to every one, who is willing to give it attentive consideration.

The lawfulness of forms of prayer can hardly be doubted by those, who consider, that they were in use in our Saviour's day, that He joined in them and gave a form to his disciples. The psalms of David indited by the Holy Spirit, with the Pentateuch, constituted the Prayer-book and liturgy of the Jewish church: and are still used for the same purpose in the christian. There is not a single precedent in the scriptures for the use of extemporaneous prayers, publicly offered in the temple or synagogue. They may have been used in the closet and at the 'corners of the streets';—but the regular public offices were conducted by prescribed forms.

The liturgy of the Episcopal Church is altogether scriptural and evangelical. It is so general in its expressions, as to allow of all needful diversity of opinion in non-essentials, — 'so comprehensive, that nothing is omitted, which is fitted to be asked in public; and so particular, as to comprize most things, which we would ask in private.' The language is simple, devout and sublime; and by general consent admitted to be unequalled by any modern compositions. A large portion of these forms was used by the universal Church in primitive times; and from that period to the present, they have never ceased to guide the devotions, animate the zeal and cherish the piety of its members. Having endured so long a period, and been tested by such favorable results, it is now too late to think of change; and it would border on impiety, to discard that, which has been consecrated by such remote antiquity, and is so completely imbued with the spirit of christianity. These venerable offices of devotion are entitled to attachment from their tendency to elevate the tone of piety, give dignity and interest to the solemn services of the sanctuary and preserve them from everything light, trifling or degrading. Their effect on the mind and heart is elevating, purifying and salutary. They improve the taste, create a lively and keen relish for the 'beauty of holiness,' inspire a love of order and decency, of harmony and unanimity, and diffuse a spirit of love, peace and joy. They direct the views of the worshipper to Christ, of whose office and dignity they convey the most exalted ideas;—they guard against dependence on human aid, or on our own merits or selfrighteousness, and point to the merits and sacrifice of Christ, as the only ground of hope for pardon and salvation. They clearly present the necessity of regeneration and a change of heart by the influences of the Holy Spirit, — of progressive holiness, and the diligent use of the sacraments, as means of grace and of advancement in the divine life.

During the period, now under review, great changes have taken place

among the denominations of christians around us. The current of religion, which ought ever to flow in a regular and uniform course, has been subjected to all the fluctuations and vicissitudes of the human character. It has had its ebb and flow; it has been tossed and ruffled by periods of agitation produced by human devices and artificial excitement; and its streams have been defiled by the excesses of human passion, the extravagances of overheated zeal and other painful tokens of human infirmity: new men have arisen and disappeared; new measures have made their entrance and exit; and new 'discoveries in theological science' have been exhibited to the dazzled multitude, and like meteors, have vanished:—but the Episcopal Church has pursued 'the even tenor of her way,' without turning to the right hand or to the left, retaining primitive institutions inviolate, and relying wholly on the promises of God for success on his own instituted means of grace. The consequence has been, a uniform effusion of the Holy Spirit on the preached word, a steady and silent descent of the refreshing dews of Heaven, a regular increase of its members and a succession of devout communicants, who by the good fruits of faith and repentance, have attested their sincerity and adorned their profession. There is no opposition on the part of the Church to the progress of real knowledge. 'New discoveries in theological science' will be embraced, when they have been weighed in the balance of the sanctuary and not found wanting. Nor is she sectarian or exclusive in her creeds or customs. She invites to her communion 'all such as are religiously and devoutly disposed'; and excludes none, but the unenlightened, the unbaptized and the unholy. The validity of her ordination and ordinances is disputed by no enlightened body of Protestants; and her whole ritual is the pure work of the Reformation, retaining the usages of the first three centuries, and discarding only the additions of popish origin. Thus it 'stands on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief corner stone.'

Let this review of the past excite us to renewed efforts to transmit unimpaired to posterity the invaluable legacy, inherited from our fathers; and let us never relinquish without a severe struggle, that, which they embraced and defended at such sacrifice of fortune and fame. Let churchmen be true to themselves and to the cause of their Master, and evince the genial effects of their principles, by scrupulous regard to the cause of truth, respect for religious institutions and anxious concern for the salvation of souls. Avoiding feuds and animosities, let them be of 'one heart and one mind; keeping the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace; knowing that there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism and one God and Father of us all.' Let them remember that partial success is not complete victory; the struggle is not yet ended: the adversary is busy,

'because he hath but a short time.' His motto is, 'Divide and conquer'; but call to mind the caution of our Divine Head, 'a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand'; — and the self answering question of St. Paul, when reasoning on the same subject, 'Is Christ divided?' Is the church composed of divided bodies or disjoined members? Are differences and diversities of opinions and practices conducive to its prosperity? If not; but if they have a contrary effect, and are at direct variance with the first principles of the Church of Christ, then beware of sects — of divisions, of schism, of every thing indeed, that tends to alienate the affections, produce separation, strife and discord, and banish that peace, harmony and unity, which are so essential to the progress of piety and the stability of our times.

It is our high privilege to have received the doctrines of our faith, drawn from the fountain of holy scripture; by men distinguished for learning and piety, who were not led by the vain pursuit of novelties; but sought for the old paths of primitive truth and simplicity; who were not disposed to spin ingenious systems, nor lay undue stress on hair-breadth distinctions, nor mystify the plain truths of the gospel or envelope them in metaphysical subtleties; but were satisfied with those few, simple truths, which had prevailed, from the beginning, and were received in every part of the christian world*; and adopted a creed, so comprehensive as to embrace all reasonable diversities, provided the fundamentals were retained. We have reason to bless God, that this great work was accomplished, before the minds of christians had been clouded and confused by the endless schemes, that have been devised, and sophisticated by the love of triumph in defending them; and that the truth was clearly elicited and placed in bold relief in the offices of the Church, before the dreamy notions of new discoveries in a region, hitherto unexplored, had set the inventions of men on the rack, and laid the scriptures on the wheel of torture. It is a subject of fervent gratitude, that deep questions are not now to be argued before private christians; — that the laity are not required to wade through unfathomable controversies in search of truth; but may drink it from the pure font of the Church and the word of God; and may stand aloof from the polemic battle-ground, by which this portion of the christian world is convulsed; and which, unless the destroying Angel be commanded to put up his sword, must terminate in the prevalence of irreligion and infidelity. Let us be thankful, likewise, that the sacred volume is copiously presented on every Lord's day, that its leading doctrines are incorporated in the liturgy and offices of the Church; and that we are permitted to drink freely of the unadulterated streams—even of

'Siloa's brook,'

'That flowed fast by the oracle of God.

*'Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus.'

One advantage more, which should not pass unnoticed in this brief sketch of blessings, is the principle of equality among all ranks and degrees of men, recognized in every part of the liturgy and offices of church. All men are regarded, as standing on a level; worshipping in one uniform language, and enjoying the privilege of its rites, on the same conditions. It has not one set of requirements for the rich and another for the poor; one form of prayer for the learned and another for the ignorant; nor does it provide for a flourish of compliments to the wealthy or powerful, who may be accidentally present; but the same language is familiar to all classes; being alike intelligible to all and equally edifying to the most lofty and the most simple understanding. It considers all alike, as sinners, needing repentance, confession and pardon; all, alike pensioners on the bounty of God; needing salvation by the merits of one and the same Saviour, and requiring to be fed by his body; — and all, as disciples of the same Master and children of the same Parent. ‘The high and the low, the rich and the poor meet together, and the Lord is the Maker of them all.’ It thus ‘humbles the pride of the lofty and exalts them of low degree,’ and gives to each a just idea of his condition and duty; while it continually directs his eye to that state, where worldly distinctions are unknown, and where the deepest humility will be the most highly exalted.

WARDENS OF QUEEN ANN'S CHAPEL FROM 1714.

Abraham Merrill,	Joseph Annis,	John Crocker,
Joshua Brown,	Daniel Coffin,	Seth Atkinson,
Abiel Long,	Samuel Bartlet,	Ichabod Atkinson,
James Freese,	John Bartlet,	Ehud Bartlet,
John Corney,	Daniel Coffin,	Joshua Lunt,
Israel Sawyer,	Daniel Coffin,	Moses Sawyer,
John Bailey,	Joseph Atkins,	James Bailey,
John Merrill,	Josiah Sawyer,	Benjamin Long,
Skipper Lunt,	John Bartlet, Jr.,	Thomas Bartlet,
Peter Merrill,	George Worthen,	Joseph Long.
Benjamin Long, Jr.,	Joseph Whitmore,	

VESTRYMEN FROM 1714.

Samuel Sawyer,	John Bartlet,	Joseph Bayley.
Abiel Long,	Richard Bartlet,	Thomas Brown,

At a meeting on the 6th April, 1716, it was agreed, that all the members of the Church shall be concerned in the Vestry.

1728.

John Bartlet,	Mr. Annis,	Mr. Brown,
Capt. Corney,	Mr. Merrill,	Mr. Lunt,
Thos. Bartlet.		

1729.

Josiah Sawyer,	Benj. Long,	Mr. Ayres.
----------------	-------------	------------

Vestry probably as before, until 1734.

Joseph Atkins, Esq.,	Mr. Josiah Sawyer,	Mr. Joseph Annis,
Mr. John Bayley,	Mr. Ayres,	Mr. Peter Merrill.

1737.

Mr. Annis,	Mr. Bayley,	Mr. Peryl,
Mr. Huse,	Mr. Seth Bartlet,	Mr. David Coffin.

1739.

J. Atkins, Esq.	Mr. John Bayley,	Mr. Thos. Bartlet,
Mr. Joseph Whitmore,	Mr. Daniel Coffin,	Mr. Josiah Sawyer, Jr.

The following persons were chosen Vestrymen, at subsequent periods.

Moses Little,	Ebenezer Wise,	James Bailey,
Benjamin Long,	Joshua Lunt,	Stephen Rogers, Jr.
Ephraim Weed,	Joseph Long,	Tristram Coffin,
Isaac Weed.		

Wardens of St. Paul's — from 1745 to 1837.

Daniel Marquand,	Tristram Dalton,	Edward Rand,
Anthony Gwynn,	Asa Porter,	Rufus King,
Thomas Tannatt,	Robert Jenkins,	Lewis Jenkins,
John Crocker,	Benj. Balch,	Samuel Cutler,
William Atkins,	John Jenkins,	Dudley A. Tyng,
Thomas Woodbridge,	John Tracy,	Tristram Coffin,
William Jaques,	Nicholas Tracy,	Samuel A. Otis,
Ambrose Davis,	William Morland,	William Woart,
Joseph Cottle,	William Savage,	James Prince,
William Jenkins,	George Jenkins,	George Jenkins, Jr.
Dudley Atkins,	Joseph Cutler,	John Dean,
Michael Dalton,	John Vinal,	Simeon Wade,
Robert Roberts,	Thomas Thomas,	George Titcomb.
Joseph Atkins,	David Cutler,	

Vestrymen to 1817. — Those names are here omitted which had served as Wardens.

Edmand Cottle,	Joseph Choate,	Wyatt St. Barbe,
Joseph Cottle,	George Deblois,	Abraham Jackson,
James Simmons,	Joseph Marquand,	John Fletcher,
Witter Cummings,	Abraham Gallishan,	Jonathan Jackson,
Patrick Tracy,	Joseph Ingersoll,	William Faris,
Benjamin Harris,	Thomas Thomas,	Edward Bass,
Godfrey Smith,	Joseph Cutler,	George Connell,
Benjamin Crocker,	Thomas Jones,	Isaac Adams.
John Tarbox,		

